University of Alberta

Sahtudene Recreation: Cultural Identity and Change in 1991 - 1992

by

James Stewart McAra

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation

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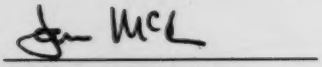

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To Michelle and Kaitlyn.

ABSTRACT

The Sahtudene of the Great Bear Lake region of Canada's Northwest Territories (NWT) are experiencing and struggling to understand and control the dramatic social and cultural changes impinging upon them. This thesis attempts to describe and analyze the traditional and contemporary aspects of recreation and sport in Fort Franklin, NWT at contact and in 1991-92.

The ecological and socio-cultural context for Sahtudene cultural identity and aboriginal boundary maintenance provides a framework within which the revitalization and devolution of contemporary culture in the small northern community can be examined. The annual cycle of recreation and sport events in 1991-92 was recreated to describe the changing community. Two case studies are also presented to more closely examine issues of power and control, administrative structures and community involvement, within these changing cultural boundaries.

The data and analysis highlights the changing culture of the Sahtudene and their attempts to revitalize an identity within the context of modern aboriginal recreation and sport.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Like many Northern Indigenous peoples, the Sahtudene of the Great Bear Lake region are experiencing, and struggling to understand and control, the dramatic social and cultural changes impinging upon them from southern Canada and around the world. Since European contact less than two centuries ago, the Sahtu have been guided by the colonizing agencies of business, church and state to forgo their traditional independent lifestyle as seasonally migratory small bands of self sufficient hunting family groups in favour of a centralized settlement life more and more dependent upon wages and state social assistance for their livelihoods. Having experienced the social problems and other dysfunctions associated with colonialism and with this rapid social change, the Dene and their Inuit neighbours are now in the process of devolving towards new and more autonomous forms of cultural syncretism and social and political autonomy.

To achieve these socio-cultural recovery and independence ends, land claims settlements, language restoration, and cultural educational inclusion have been Sahtudene priorities. Restoration of traditional games and recreation culture has generally not been seen as a priority by the Native leadership. Until recently, the cultural restoration and community development potential of traditional play and recreational cultural activities has been appreciated by only a few indigenous leaders. Since 1970 the Northern Games Association, and its Inuvialuit and Dene leaders, have been exceptions of course in actively recognizing that community participation in games, dance and other forms of recreation can contribute in important ways to the production, reproduction or modification of that society's culture (Cheska, 1987). In rapidly changing cultures, of which the Sahtudene is one, the proactive restoration and encouragement of traditional recreation and popular culture can be a potentially powerful agent in the overall socio-cultural recovery and community redevelopment process.

To this end the Northern Games Association began in the early 1970's to encourage Inuit and Dene communities to document, relearn and celebrate their traditional cultural games and dances, before the traditional wisdom held by their remaining elders was lost forever. In 1976 the Association facilitated a traditional game documentation and celebration workshop in Fort

Franklin[1] to record and encourage the revival of traditional Sahtudene games, dance and recreational culture (Scott, 1979a). The participants hoped that this event would lead to a renewed interest and participation in these activities in Great Bear community recreation programs and schools, to the development of regional Dene Games events, and to a Dene Games component in the Arctic Winter Games. They also hoped that these developments would contribute to a broad-based restoration of Sahtudene culture, identity, and pride.

Fifteen years later, the present author and his wife arrived in Ft. Franklin, where the former had been hired as the Interim Recreation Leader (Recreation Director). In the eventful year and a half that followed, they contributed much to the recreational life of the community while being immersed in and sharing in an interesting and sometimes puzzling blend of traditional northern Dene and imported southern Euro-Canadian recreation. During those eighteen months in Fort Franklin, the author kept a professional log, facility and programme schedules, and daily journals of their experiences. He struggled to understand the experience as they lived it, and to make sense of the complex mix of the traditional Dene activity and of the process that he was living both professionally and personally.

On his return to the South, he decided to explore and develop a greater understanding of those experiences from an academic perspective by entering an MA program. He chose as his focus the social and community development functions that games and recreation can serve in a rapidly changing culture, such as that of the Northern Dene. Drawing on the records and reflections of his lived experiences, and those of his spouse, the author has attempted to reconstruct the Fort Franklin recreational cycle of events in 1991-92. The present study addresses a series of research questions of theoretical interest and of some importance to the understanding of social development, by examining the condition of contemporary settlement recreation life in light of existing research on traditional Dene play culture and community recreation development. The subsequent sections outlines the specific purpose, research problems , methods, findings, and analyses which follow from these research interests.

Central Purpose

This thesis uses the southern Euro-Canadian recreation professional's records and experiences of the annual cycle of recreational organization and activities in a 1991 Sahtudene community in order to describe and analyse the interacting and evolving roles of Sahtu traditional and Euro-Canadian contemporary forms of recreation in Dene cultural restoration and community development as part of a larger socio-political devolution process.

The central purpose of this project is thus to further our understanding of the current and potential functions of traditional and contemporary Sahtudene recreation activities in Sahtu self-determination and in cultural identity affirmation.

Major Subproblems

Pursuit of this central study purpose involved addressing the following research problems:

1. To describe the traditional and contemporary ecological and socio-cultural context of Fort Franklin and the Sahtudene;
2. To describe and analyse a year in the recreational life of an isolated Northern Sahtudene community (Fort Franklin) as recorded by a new Southern Recreation Professional;
3. To describe and analyse occurrences and social functions of Sahtudene traditional games and recreation recorded around the yearly cycle at both the date of European contact and today (1991-1992);
4. To describe and analyse occurrences and social functions of selected Southern Euro-Canadian recreation events in Fort Franklin today (1991-1992);
5. To examine the cultural development potential of and implications for using traditional recreational activities in a contemporary Sahtudene community positioned within processes of devolution of political power.

Significance of the Study

It is hoped that this study will have both social and practical significance and will contribute to our basic understanding and body of knowledge. For the Dene and for all citizens and

professionals who may be in a position to work in some capacity with peoples undergoing rapid social change, the project and report may provide some further understanding. In particular, it may provide an understanding of the potential of recreation programs and leadership in facilitating self-directed cultural and community development. For developing academic fields such as leisure studies, the anthropology of recreation and sport, and native studies, it may contribute to both our basic knowledge of the nature of a First Nation's community recreation and to our development of grounded theory of the social functions of traditional play in culture production and reproduction.

Traditional Sahtudene cultural activities, once strongly reinforced throughout the community in its regular daily and annual livelihood routines, have been significantly modified. In part, they have been modified by the actions and undertakings of recreation professionals imported from the South by Territorial and community governments. Community recreation and leisure activities have come to rely on a cultural value set that was, until recently, foreign to the North.

This obvious erosion of an indigenous cultural base and an increasing reliance on a new set of cultural norms has marginalised the important functions formerly played by traditional Sahtudene forms of recreation. Northern residents are demanding more culturally sensitive recreation and leisure programming at the community level. In this context the Sahtudene may now choose to recognize and reinforce their traditional play and game culture as an important aspect of their distinct group identity and of their cultural survival. Southern trained professionals may be expected to react accordingly and create programs that are congruent with a way of life foreign to them, but important to the community. The role of culture traits in the development of these new activities will come from a revival or retrieval of a system of beliefs that has been influenced from outside the cultural boundaries of the Sahtudene. The replacement of introduced Euro-Canadian programs with traditional Sahtudene programs, or the synthesis of the two programs, will be difficult to achieve without an understanding of traditional Sahtudene culture in its contemporary manifestation.

Limited research has been undertaken since the early 1970's concerning Northern recreation and related topics. This thesis will expand on those limited sources and aid in the planning and

development of culturally sensitive recreation and leisure programs for small communities in the North.

Methodology

The research methodology used in any research should reflect the needs of the study. If a researcher is to examine the changing role of recreation in a devolving Sahtudene community, he requires data that describes the traditional and contemporary life of residents. To collect data that contain descriptive information about the traditional values and culture of the Sahtudene, but that also accurately represents the contemporary culture found in 1991 and 1992, the research required that a highly descriptive form of qualitative method had to be used. By modelling the research method on a form of participant observation, the researcher could use the data he gathered during the defined period. This retrospective examination as a form of ethno-historical reconstruction is carried out in this study in order to make accessible a significant amount of descriptive data from a defined time period.

Qualitative methodology seeks to facilitate an understanding of a subject in terms of what a given situation means to the people being studied in that situation (Scott & Godby, 1990). The cultural activities and daily life in Fort Franklin are examples of a unique cultural situation that requires understanding from within. With a more complete understanding of both the tacit and the explicit knowledge obtained from the researcher's life as a resident of Fort Franklin, he was able to record events and better understand the reasons for cultural change.

There are however, concerns as to the validity and reliability of such qualitative methods and their use in research. LeCompte and Goetz (1982) discuss the problematic nature of qualitative research, and the serious problem with the assessment of credibility. The nature of subjective versus objective research methods and the data analysis process (with considerations of validity and reliability) have become a dichotomy of choice. The dichotomy however may distort and mislead if applied to research design activities (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982: 54).

The problems with the reliability of a study and the measure by which a study can be accurately reproduced, are addressed by many researchers (see LeCompte and Goetz, 1982: 32 for an

overview). They agree that unique situations cannot be reproduced until sufficient detail of the analytical construct has been standardized between disciplines. They outline several methods that are effectively utilized for analysis of qualitative data (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982: 34) but reinforce the complicated nature of the data and process involved in such research.

Participant observation and the use of an ethno-historical reconstruction of 'lived' events enables this study to describe the context of day-to-day affairs in Fort Franklin. The cyclic nature inherent to the ethno-historical reconstruction and the use of participant observation increases the validity of this study. Reliability is thus based on the congruency of the image created by the description with the observer to the general form of events experienced. Corroboration is provided by other researchers with specialized knowledge in this field of study discussed the data with the researcher to verify the context and possible implications of the data used in preparing an analysis of the situation.

Data Collection

To gather the required information to complete the project, both primary (field work) and secondary (historical and archival) sources were used. Both melded to recreate and clarify images of Sahtudene life in the past and present (ca. 1991-92). Secondary sources provided much of the background on the Sahtudene and their growth in the region. Primary sources were used in gaining an understanding of what it is like to live in a small, isolated community and sustain a way of life that is constantly under pressure to change.

Field work involved the reconstruction of a period of life in the community for both the researcher (ie, the recreation officer as observer), and for his co- field researcher. Retrospective participant observation, as it might be called, is used to reconstruct and analyse images of life in the community. Primary sources used to this end include appointment books, diaries, personal records, photographs, and personal and professional communications.

In order to fully utilize the primary information the author synthesized and recorded the events of his time in Fort Franklin. Available resources included his diary, a day timer and the Minutes from Recreation Committee meetings. He constructed images of events, people and moments of

importance, recording them by writing them into short narratives in chronological order. Once a detailed chronological template of occurrences had been constructed, he was able to discuss many of the events, gleaning further details of certain situations while adding new information from other sources. By constantly checking these reconstructed images with the co-field researcher he built in to the process an ongoing validity and reliability check.

Validity of the Data

The following process was used to maximize the available information and resources.

- Recall and record in note form the basic functions and happenings within a situation.
- Recall and discuss with others involved in the same or a similar situation, an event, detailing information and recording it in context.
- Using narrative as a format, record and modify situations to a format similar to Sahtudene stories and discussions that had been heard or participated in. This was the author's initial attempt to further interpret and understand the culture of the residents of Fort Franklin. Through this analysis the author attempted to present an accurate representation of Sahtudene culture from a unique viewpoint.
- Using qualitative methodology analyse the collected data, examining it for dominant themes and patterns.
- Once an initial analysis is complete, research the dominant emerging themes to attain a greater understanding of the situation. This analysis is used to develop the major proposition(s) for this thesis.

Throughout the process sections of data were continually amended to reflect new or revised research material. In this process the author's co-field researcher was invaluable. Her many shared and personal experiences added important data that was unique in its form and content, and had not been available to the primary investigator due to his position in the community. This unique combination of a coherent image and perception is an important part of recording a unique but indicative set of experiences in Fort Franklin.

Data collection was followed up through conversations and correspondence with friends in Fort Franklin since the researcher's departure have also been used to clarify situations and bring

attention to other situations that had not been considered in earlier stages of the reconstruction. By using the detailed data from these diverse sources, the author was able to reconstruct an accurate image of the events in the community during his time there.

Secondary sources are archival and include historical documents from early explorers, missionaries, and residents, and anthropological ethnographic works, government documents (municipal, band and Territorial). The historical documents provide an understanding of the frame of reference within which the Dene were viewed during periods of early contact. Recent research helped define aspects of Dene life which may be overshadowed by the colonization of the North by Euro-Canadians. Of particular importance in the reconstruction of traditional Sahtu recreation was the documentation of traditional Sahtu games, lastly, at the 1976 Fort Franklin Bear Lake Elders Workshop (Scott, 1979a).

All the sources are essential to establishing an accurate image of the Sahtudene culture in the past and present. Contemporary Sahtudene values, strongly influenced by revitalized values and norms, may greatly affect recreation programs in the future. It cannot be assumed that the author did not presume to fully comprehend all aspects of community living in the North. He did however endeavour to understand the events that had a direct or indirect effect on his life and that of his co-field researcher. The primary investigator and his co-field researcher were active participants in the life of the community, although they were only in Fort Franklin for a limited period. They were not outsiders, unlike many who visited and worked in the community, yet neither were they insiders- nor would they ever be.

Delimitations of the Study

This study and any implications drawn from it are delimited to the recorded and recalled reconstruction of experiences and perceptions of the author and his co-field researcher, documented during their professional and personal lives in Fort Franklin, NWT.

The period of observation in this study extended from January, 1991 to March 1992 during which time the author functioned as the Recreation Director for the Incorporated Hamlet of Fort Franklin. During this period, the Sahtu Region Land Claims negotiations were major influences

on the lives of the residents as they tried to negotiate a settlement that respected their lives on the land. This study is focussed on a period surrounding the signing of the Agreement In Principle between the people of the Sahtu and the Government of Canada. It is a period of cultural revitalization for the Sahtudene that presents aspects of survival and revival of traditional Sahtudene values and norms that are subject to acculturation and assimilation forces exerted by the dominant Euro-Canadian culture[2].

The Sahtudene of Fort Franklin are only one group of people in an environment that is quite diverse and covers a large area of the North. The population of the Sahtu region of the Northwest Territories is primarily made up of people who descend from the Hare, Dogrib, Yellowknife and Mountain people. These are people who have lived or moved between Fort Norman, Fort Good Hope, Colville Lake and other locations outside the region. Fort Franklin is therefore not made up of a homogeneous group of people from the Sahtu only. They may be considered a heterogeneous group primarily made up of people from the entire Sahtu region.

It is not the purpose of this thesis to examine and present an all encompassing/comprehensive ethnology of the recreation and leisure culture of the Sahtudene. Social, political and economic conditions in the community play a vital part in the complete analysis. However, the dynamic nature of these conditions dictated a static framework of conditions to be assumed for the period under consideration. Changes that have occurred or could occur from the static period to a dynamic future period are not predicted in this study.

The author recognizes that his view of many aspects of life in a small community was somewhat restricted. Social and leisure activities did occur without his involvement. This thesis only represents those aspects of social and leisure activities to which he was privileged to have access.

Limitations

The complex and multifaceted nature of the author's role as recreation professional, in a situ 'research instrument', and community citizen provided both unique opportunities for rich, 'lived experience' data and for potentially shaping and limiting the nature and scope of the record of

that data. In reflecting on and acknowledging these potential limitations, the author has identified the following potential constraints.

Traditional aboriginal knowledge is oral. By listening, Sahtudene culture and its inherent values can be better understood. Lack of knowledge of the language is therefore a limiting factor. The author does not speak Northern Slavey (Slavey), although he has learned several key words of Slavey which assisted in his comprehension of some conversations (usually involving intermittent interjections of English). Unless there were translations or key phrases in English, the author's understanding of conversations held in Slavey was limited. The essence of a conversation in Slavey is lost in the translation into English. There is a greater loss in the author's inability to speak or understand Slavey and in others' inability (or unwillingness) to speak English, as with some elders and in the author's inability to take part in an original exchange of ideas in a common language. Certain expectations and aspects of the Sahtudene way of life were never fully understood before translation or interpretation was requested. However, the author and his co-field researcher's acceptance into Fort Franklin social circles allowed unique insight into Sahtudene life, provided a solid foundation and rapport for information gathering.

Many situations that one individual or group takes for granted are unique to others. Without an understanding of relevant cultural expectations, a person can often misunderstand important situations. To become culturally aware is to increase one's understanding of the relevance of any situation. The author and his co-field researcher strove to become more culturally sensitive and gained a greater understanding of the Sahtudene by becoming "outside-insiders". This sensitivity and partial understanding of the Sahtu and its residents took time and effort to develop. It was not done to further research goals, but in order to facilitate their enjoyment of life in the small northern community. They do not presume to understand every aspect of life in Fort Franklin.

The information used in the preparation of this thesis was obtained through the systematic recall of participant observation data while living in the community, and it was based on personal interest in certain aspects of life, not through research questions and objective interrogation. As an employee of the Hamlet and a member of the community, the author was in a position that a researcher could not emulate. His position in the community made him privy to information and

personal opinions that might not have been discussed with a researcher visiting the community purely for the purpose of research.

Perspective of the Researcher

Given the complexity and time-extended nature of the author's role in collecting, collating and analysing the field data, some reflection on potential role strains and conflict is called for. As the author was a resident, not a researcher, he has attempted to recognize the potential for misinterpretation of situations caused by his ethnocentric biases. Dynamic as they are, the biases did influence his perspective toward the studied subject. Initially in awe of the "Dene Way" and blind to certain aspects of small community life, his understanding and respect for the residents and their traditions grew. His feelings toward "outsiders" may have shaped his impressions of many events and activities in the community, region and the North.

The author has tried to reflect on and be aware of any personal biases when reporting and researching this topic. Despite any effort to acknowledge personal presuppositions one is never fully able to screen everything and become a totally objective researcher. Participation, observation, and experience are intertwined, and must be considered an ever-present aspect of carrying out participant observations. The richness of this data on contemporary Sahtudene culture must be balanced with the limitations in the methods used and the personal influences involved in gathering and interpreting the data.

Narrative Form and Personal Stylistic Approaches

In order to best describe and understand the role of recreation and games in the revival of Sahtudene culture, several cultural elements must be presented in context. The interaction of these cultural elements serves to make up a part of the complete culture, and they must be portrayed in an understandable way. Once they are presented and understood in context, the analysis of the elements involved in defining certain characteristics of Sahtudene culture can be completed.

In living with the Sahtudene and learning to appreciate their way of life, the author has found that the combination of the personal narrative form of writing and the detached analytical style of writing is conducive to an optimal, effective presentation of Sahtudene culture. The personal narrative form of writing, similar to aboriginal oral traditions, was chosen because of its potential to effectively present important aspects of life in Fort Franklin. Rather than limiting himself to a straight analysis of data, in an attempt to quantify unique cultural characteristics, the author attempted to present a realistic image of Sahtudene life in 1991-92 (provided in Chapter 5). The qualitative method, in the form of a narrative and subsequent analysis, is intended to provide the reader with a comprehensive image of recreational life in Fort Franklin taken from the richness of the cultural situations.

Contextual Definitions

Recreation

To formally define the activities that occur in a group of people is difficult. Many definitions exist that refer to leisure, sport, recreation, and play in certain ways. For this thesis, the definition of a term that effectively portrays the wide variety of recreational elements is required. McFarland (1970) defined recreation as

> The natural expression of certain human interests and needs seeking satisfaction during leisure. It is an individual or group experience motivated primarily by the enjoyment and satisfaction derived therefrom. It takes many forms and may be planned or spontaneous activity.
>
> McFarland, 1970: 83

In this thesis the definition of recreation must also consider the identification of a time frame. In this study recreation is considered to be that time when an individual is not working, or engaged in activities that are essential to daily subsistence living. Further, recreation may involve elements of play, games or sport but is not restricted by cultural variations.

Sahtudene

The aboriginal people (Dene) that reside in Fort Franklin or in the area surrounding Great Bear Lake are considered the Sahtudene. Non-native residents and aboriginal people from other areas of Canada are not considered to be Sahtudene, but are still considered to be members of the larger community and as such have an active role in the region's daily activities.

Overview and Format of Thesis

This thesis begins with an overview of the theoretical constructs and perspective used in the analysis of recreation and games within this specific cultural and historical context. The syncretism of cultures, establishment of aboriginal boundaries and defining cultural identity in conjunction with sources of power and control within the community are also discussed as theoretical perspectives in the context of cultural change. This chapter also provides a conceptual and theoretical perspective on the social functions of games and play in culture, and concludes with a section that provides further grounding for the analysis of cultural change within an isolated Sahtudene community.

To provide the ecological and socio-cultural context for examining community recreational events, an overview of Sahtudene anthropological and post-contact historical roots, geographic setting, and demographics of this small, isolated, northern community are presented.

The creation of a holistic image of the yearly life cycle in this northern community is begun by presenting an annual natural cycle of activities. Highlighting recreation, games and significant community events, this 'year in the life' provides a background image within which to examine the role of games and recreation as elements of cultural change in the North and the case studies of selected community events.

Traditional games types and occurrences reported at contact and documented at the 1976 Northern Games Workshop are then examined. Occurrences observed in 1991-92 are discussed. A narrative case study of cultural events which occurred at the Fort Franklin Culture Centre highlights and facilitates analysis of the contemporary essence of Sahtu traditional recreation. It

is in this venue that strong traditional culture is reflected in a contemporary setting. The decision-making process and its integration with a recreation administration model is identified as part of socio-cultural change. The importance of a traditionally oriented cultural venue and a series of recreational events serves to illustrate the role of games and recreation in a changing social structure.

A second narrative case study provides an examination of an apparently Euro-Canadian event in the form of a spring carnival. The dynamically interacting and changing roles of traditional Sahtudene culture and contemporary Euro-Canadian leisure culture present an event that serves the whole community in one form or another. Elements of boundary maintenance and aboriginal identity are displayed throughout.

Drawing together the case studies provides a background for the concluding analysis of contemporary Sahtudene recreational culture and further identifies elements of culture that continue to be eroded, modified, or renewed. The syncretism of Sahtudene culture and Euro-Canadian culture is seen through elements of power and control within games and recreation. Further implications for the development of sport and recreation in the North will also be presented in consideration and conclusion of the elements contained within this thesis.

The thesis concludes with a critical methodological reflection and personal epilogue on the field and research experience.

Chapter Notes

1. In 1992 the name of the settlement was changed from the Incorporated Hamlet of Fort Franklin to the traditional Déline. This was a change to the name that residents had long used as the proper name for the location of the community.

2. To gather more information for my initial research questions I applied to return to Fort Franklin to conduct further research and gather more data. I found that I was unable to return to Fort Franklin as a researcher. Although my wife, Michelle, and I had been invited back to the community for a wedding and for Christmas celebrations we would not be welcomed as researchers. Chief Raymond Taniton and his Council expressed concern over the number of researchers who entered the community in the past and left without returning anything of relative value to the community. The Sahtudene were tired of being studied. I understand and respect the wishes of our friends and the community.

CHAPTER 2
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND CONCEPTS

Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical perspectives and concepts utilized in describing and analysing the traditional elements of the Sahtu community recreation program experience by the author in 1991-92. It also critically reviews literature related to the central purpose and subproblems explored in this study.

The first section summarizes Dacks (1981) 'macro' social and political theoretical perspective used to describe and interpret Sahtudene community recreation within the overall historical and cultural change context (Dacks' work will also be discussed in further detail in Chapter three : A Colonial Economy). A second section surveys the more 'micro' level theory used to explicate the cultural production and reproduction process in maintaining ethnic boundaries for groups like the Sahtu. The role of traditional games and other cultural recreation elements is described and analysed using the constructs and proposition of this model developed by Barth (1969). A third section presents the theoretical framework and conceptual tools for explaining the specific social functions that games and other traditional recreational elements can serve in the production, maintenance and reproduction of culture.

A final section reviews research and scholarly literature on Northern traditional recreation in general and on Sahtudene traditional games and recreation in particular. Thesis literature review would provide a vocabulary and catalogue of activities which could be seen in field records. It was also felt that this literature review could sensitize the author for potential cultural approaches to or influences on introduced recreational forms.

Decolonizing Fort Franklin: Dacks' Devolutionary Perspective

An analysis of the role of traditional elements in contemporary Sahtudene community recreation presupposes a holistic understanding of larger Dene and northern Canadian socio-political contexts. Dacks (1981 & 1990) provides this study with such a 'macro' socio-historical

perspective for understanding the decolonization of Fort Franklin and the role of traditional recreation within that process. His viewpoint forms the overall 'macro theoretical' framework for the present work.

For hundreds of years the Sahtudene and their aboriginal precursors subsisted as autonomous family hunting, gathering, and fishing bands who seasonally migrated from hunting grounds to fishery within a flexible yearly cycle. Approximately two centuries ago, the British explorers Hearne and Mackenzie contacted them and European colonization began. Conversion to the commercialization of nature, the market economy and private property ownership began slowly with trapping and the fur trade.

Colonization and the creation of dependency on the Canadian state was also slow but nonetheless overwhelming. In the late 1960's young Northern Dene leaders responded to a growing Dene concern regarding the serious social problems and cultural deterioration resulting from such European colonization and so formed the Dene Nation. Decolonization of the Dene began in earnest with indigenous peoples challenging industrial development, pursuing land claims settlements, and demanding language and cultural preservation and restoration initiatives. Colonial government structures have been critiqued and a decolonization process referred to as devolution has been set in process.
The North is dependent on an economy that is very unreliable for constant support (Dacks, 1981:125). The communities of the North must realize that in order to combat the southern influences, especially those designed to provide short-term jobs while the real wealth returns south, they must redevelop their own culture. Redevelopment of Dene autonomy and self-determination will depend upon the restoration of Dene culture and the return to a reliance upon the community and not on outside sources and influences.

Cultural Production and Reproduction: Barth's Ethnic Group Cultural Boundary Model

Dacks provides the 'macro' socio-historical perspective from which Dene socio-cultural change and community recreation can be understood. However, in order to focus in on the concrete community, a more 'micro' level of analysis is required. To describe and analyse the nature of

cultural identity production and reproduction and the processes involved in ethnic group boundary and identity maintenance, the theoretical model of Barth's (1969) is utilized which provides the study with the more focussed level of analysis for examining the role of traditional cultural forms of Sahtudene games and recreation.

In the brief explanation of Barth's model which follows, his basic constructs are first defined and then applied in the Sahtudene context as they explain the potential role of traditional elements in community cultural redevelopment in rapidly changing times.

Ethnic Grouping

Boundaries must be identified in order to identify those features of a culture or group that are important to their existence. The features must, in turn, be examined in order to define the criteria for membership in an ethnic group. Barth's definition of ethnic group as (a) largely biologically self-perpetuating; (b) sharing fundamental cultural values, realised in overt unity in cultural forms; (c) made up of a field of communication and interaction; (d) having membership which identifies itself, and is identified by others, as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order (Barth, 1969: 200) clearly outlines the boundaries that must be set, before examining membership within.

Recognising the limits of his "ideal" ethnic group, the role of interaction between groups in the maintenance of social organization is also seen as important in ethnic group boundary maintenance. Group features (overt institutional forms of behaviour) are often only those features that members themselves regard as significant. Overt signals and signs (often the makeup of character traits used in the defining of a culture or group) must be combined with basic value orientations. To accomplish this, ethnic categories provide an organisational vessel that may be given varying amounts and forms of content in different socio-cultural systems (Barth, 1969:203).

Paine (1974) contested that issues of power and value were deficient in Barth's proposed models. They were two core aspects of any society, and in Paine's opinion were two core values that should be considered more important and dynamic than just constants within any society. As Barth considered the ethnic boundaries to be dynamic, so the power and value aspects of a

society had to be considered dynamic. Their role in the determination of overt signals that contribute to the creation of a boundary is important, but must also be recognized as important by the group in question.

The Sahtudene have an identity as a distinct ethnic group in the sense of Barth's definition. This identity, often seen as a secondary characteristic in the face of an overwhelming Euro-Canadian culture, is now starting to emerge as a primary one. Decisions affecting the Sahtudene and their identity are being made with the aid of land claim negotiations, economic activities and other events, each requiring traditional value based input. The strength of culture required to promote and maintain the decisions and subsequent identity, comes partially from the recreation, games and play in which the Sahtudene participate.

The importance of the distinct Sahtudene ethnic identity is undergoing a resurgence and, subsequently, is being strengthened. It will eventually serve to modify the dominant Euro-Canadian social value set taken on by the Sahtudene.

Dene Cultural Identity and Ethnic Boundary Maintenance

Boundary maintenance and ethnic identity are important to any culture trying to define itself in a continually expanding cultural mosaic. The natives of Canada's north are in a position to define, for both themselves and others, their unique place within the mosaic.

Culture, emerging from the interaction and acceptance of commonly held values, norms, and roles, creates a mosaic of interaction that is unique. The process whereby the Sahtu culture is maintained is based on individual development, cultural transmission and social integration. These factors are reinforced through a socialization process that begins at birth, and lasts until the members die. Traditional and contemporary Sahtudene culture is part of an identity that can be recognized through recreation, play and games that the Sahtudene participate in are a key part of this identity.

Recreation, in the form of games and play activities, has an important function in the production and reproduction of culture (Cheska, 1987). It reflects changes in culture over time. Sahtudene

culture, and the values associated with it, have been influenced by changes in the traditional and contemporary recreational pursuits of the Sahtudene.

Traditional Sahtudene Identity

The residents of Great Bear Lake and the surrounding area have been identified by Osgood (1932) as a distinct group of Athapaskan natives. He called them the Satudene. Although many groups of natives from Hare, Dogrib, Yellowknife and Slave frequented the resource rich area, Osgood felt that the Sahtudene were an identifiable group that had come to reside in the region permanently, and viewed themselves as separate from other groups around them[1]. Osgood, Petitot (1878), and others have identified several smaller groups living in regions around Great Bear Lake. Named according to the area of Great Bear Lake which they inhabited the lake's residents slowly became a population easily identified by researchers, missionaries, trappers, and others; a population of people assigned a unique ethnic identity.

The Sahtudene have a culture that is identified by their dependence on Great Bear Lake and is resources. It should be considered significant that the lake is the focus for their survival. They depend on the diverse resources that the lake provides for survival. Residents consider the lake to be a resource to be used cooperatively, not owned individually.

Contemporary Cultural Boundaries

The Sahtudene are an aboriginal culture that is made up of several sub-groups. Their cultural identity results from the culmination of several aboriginal cultures, the Hare, Dogrib, Yellowknife and the Slave, and is maintained by the boundaries enforced by the residents of Fort Franklin. The exact nature of the society and its cultural components may vary depending on who is being referred to, but the Sahtudene consider themselves to have a distinct cultural identity.

Several residents of Fort Franklin in 1991 referred to the importance of their identity as Sahtudene, but at the same time the regional breakdown and identification of group membership for specific communities was also made known. Some residents of Fort Franklin displayed their

strong feelings towards living in the community, while not reducing the importance of having lived in one or more of the other communities in the western Arctic. They, in fact, identify with their time living in other Sahtu communities, recognizing the differences between the communities, but upholding the values wherever they reside.

Each community within the Sahtu provides residents with experiences that may be applied to their lives as individuals and as a group. For experiences beyond their own times younger residents are again seeking the views and advice of elders; southerners are listening too.

For older residents of Fort Franklin, the time they spent on the land was an important part of the enculturation of the young to valued family principles. When the family moved from the land to the community, again enculturation took place, this time through an assimilation of southern Euro-Canadian values, that eventually dominated traditional Sahtudene culture (Cheska, 1984:246). The young Sahtudene seem to lack an understanding of certain values within their own traditional culture. Contemporary Sahtudene culture is reforming and recreating boundaries that reflect changing attitudes and values from the entire region, similar to those changes that occurred when the family unit became part of the community with urbanization.

In the 1970's many Sahtudene recognized the importance of traditional culture (Scott, 1996). They also recognized that it was being lost with the passing of the elders and the changing values of younger generations. Indigenous knowledge and traditions were not being passed from generation to generation as in the past.

It is acknowledged that in order to have a future, the Sahtudene must remember their past, and their identity as a distinctive group must be recognized. The maintenance of a boundary within the group suggests existence criteria for the determination of membership. Ethnic boundary maintenance is performed through social boundaries, ones that persist if they imply marked differences in behaviour (Barth, 1969: 205).

Recreation, play and games are a means to revive and revitalize Sahtudene traditions and values, incorporating boundaries into contemporary life. Ethnic group identity depends on boundaries expressed in persistent social contact between different people, a venue that can reinforce

identity. Aboriginal recreation, play and games may be seen as culturally significant in defining contemporary Sahtudene society.

A Time For Change in the NWT

It is the author's opinion that the Sahtudene have come to a point in their social development where the southern value set is incongruent with their developing culture. The wage economy has not precipitated full employment, as had been suggested it would (Dacks, 1981). This support structure is no longer viable and the Sahtudene must make do with their available resources. These traditional resources are land based; they are re-emerging as a means of community and cultural stability. Sport and recreation in the form of traditional games is becoming more prominent and as such serves to reflect the ongoing changes in Sahtudene life and values. This revival of traditional Sahtudene values in the form of traditional games and land based activities is one possible way to reinforce the changes occurring in the society in general.

Review of Literature: Play, Games, and Recreation in Culture

Recreation, in the form of games and play activities, has an important function in the production and reproduction of culture (Cheska, 1987). They reflect changes in culture over time. Sahtudene culture, and the values associated with it, have been influenced by changes in the traditional and contemporary recreational pursuits of the Sahtudene. The important function of recreation, play, and games in aboriginal society has long been overlooked as an indicator of cultural identity.

Historical forms of leisure activities are now being analysed for culture identifying traits in contemporary form. The strength of Sahtudene cultural revitalization is seen through the diverse and numerous activities that were undertaken in Fort Franklin in 1991-92. This analysis of Contemporary forms of Sahtudene leisure activities assists in a redefinition of aboriginal boundaries, which contribute to overall cultural identity. This chapter identifies several issues that are important to an overall understanding of the role and function of recreation, play and games. Traditional definitions of play and games assist in the development of foundations for functional analysis of contemporary Sahtudene recreation, play and games.

Defining Play

A brief review of classical concepts and theoretical ideas about play and games may assist in the development of foundation for the functional analysis of contemporary Sahtudene recreation, play, and games. A formal definition of play was proposed by Huizinga in the landmark work Homo Ludens.

> Summing up the formal characteristics of play, we might call it a free activity standing quite consciously outside `ordinary' life as being `not serious', but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly. It is an activity connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it. It proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner. It promotes the formation of social groupings which tend to surround themselves with secrecy and to stress their difference from the common world by disguise or other means.
>
> Huizinga, 1949: 32.

Play develops into a more formal classification that involves limitations in order to be defined as a game. A game may be defined as any activity (play) that has (1) organization, (2) competition, (3) two or more sides, (4) criteria for determining the winner, and (5) agreed upon rules (Roberts, Arth, and Bush, 1959). Activities that involve these criteria may be seen as a higher form of play.

> The function of play in higher forms which concerns us here can largely be derived from the two basic aspects under which we meet it: as a contest *for* something or a representation *of* something. These two functions can unite in such a way that the game `represents' a contest, or else becomes a contest for the best representation of something.
>
> Huizinga, 1949: 32.

If a game, or higher form of play, is seen to stand alone as a complete form, or have an association to a particular aspect of culture, it must be recognized as having more than just a simple purpose as Huizinga first surmised. Indeed, Huizinga recognized the complex nature of

play in a higher form and its importance in society. Blanchard and Cheska (1985:42) suggest that play at a higher level might have form "in" something rather than, as Huizinga first suggested, form "of" something. Again, this recognition that play and aspects of play may represent more for a culture than just simple leisure activity is an important part of understanding the roles of play and games in any society. The larger cultural mosaic surrounding a game event must be recognized for its importance within a culture.

Functional Analysis: Game Types and Socio-cultural Structure

Anthropologists and other social scholars have now begun to analyse relationships between a society's play and games structure and the structure of the larger culture and social structure. Early work in this tradition of functional analysis often involved the classification of games and correlating cultural game preferences with aspect of ecological adaptation, social structure, values or norms. Roberts, Arth and Bush, pioneers in this field, proposed that games could be classified into three groups based on the use of kinetic prowess, chance or strategy (Roberts, Arth and Bush, 1959). Kinetic prowess involves any physical-skill related action (dexterity, mobility, strength, et cetera). Chance is defined as a random selection and strategy as a rational choice based on many courses of action (Cheska, 1979). Although some games are easily classified into one category others may be harder to define. Therefore the predominant purpose or function of the game should be considered for primary classification.

Games of kinetic prowess may be related to aspects of the natural environment and survival. Games of strategy represent the social interaction within a society and often indicate the relative complexity of the society. Games of chance represent an interaction with the supernatural and the expression of that link.

Roberts, Arth and Bush (1959) suggest that games have expressive and model characteristics within every culture that relate to the three classifications of kinetic prowess, strategy and chance. The relationship between the games and the needs of any society are complex and generalized characteristics should not be made without consideration of the complete society. The authors go on to state that expressive games do not fulfil the biological survival aspects of

the society and that a majority of games portray aspects of a culture that are important to that culture.

Play and games within the culture of the Sahtudene reinforce the defined value set. Activities that positively reinforce that value set reflect on the culture and relate to the social system in which they are embedded (Eitzen & Sage, 1986: 23). As social systems change members will accept or reject the elements of change. External factors will often influence massive change, such as the colonisation of the North. It may be further surmised that native groups across the Arctic have been influenced this way by southern values and people moving through the North. Dene cultural change may have been partially due to the incursion of southern values, norms, and roles.

Historical View of Games

Crowe (1992) suggested that the role of games for many Northern aboriginal people was a statement of power. Contests between bands and tribes were held in order to display status and power. Culin (1907), Catlin (1903) and other authors often assumed games to be universal across the North and often suggested or assumed that the games of one group could be attributed to many others. Many writers use the Inuit games, by far the most familiar, as an archetype for Dene games, amalgamating Inuit, Dene, Métis and other groups together under the banner of northern aboriginal.

Redevelopment of Dene autonomy and self-determination will depend largely on the restoration of Dene community and cultural identity, including traditional cultural play and recreation culture. Researchers interested in the play and games aspects of society dealt with northern aboriginal groups in general. Early explorers such as Mackenzie, Hearn, Franklin, and Richardson provided limited information about the Western Subarctic region and its inhabitants. These documents, once interpreted by scholars, provided information to establish boundaries and groupings for the aboriginal people in areas of limited contact. Several groups within a region were often assumed to have identical or similar cultural traits. This perhaps reflects an ethnocentric bias to the perceived societal structure of Dene society by early anthropologists. The lack of credible and documented evidence to suggest any complex nature to the games and

activities within a region that had not been extensively researched by "trained professionals" has lead to a misunderstanding of the complex nature and function of play and games in the evolving Dene society. Dene games did involve elements of strategy as well as kinetic prowess and chance. As well, the games and the activities surrounding the games must be seen as a whole event and one must not be limited to the performance of the game as if in a vacuum when analysing the importance of play and games in Dene society.

The Sahtudene have many games, and games of kinetic prowess appear to be the most prominent. Yet they are quick to identify that games of chance also influence their lives and that there are certain strategies for being involved in such events. Early researchers of native games suggest that games of strategy are not apparent amongst the groups associated closest to the Dene. Sutton-Smith and Roberts (n.d.: 101) suggested that societies, like the Sahtudene, that have games of kinetic prowess and chance, but not strategy, are oriented around environmental, individual and social uncertainty. Culin (1907:31) suggested that American Indians lacked games of pure skill and calculation (strategy) indicating that games of chance and skill were the only ones present.

The participation in traditional games may be interpreted as a form of maintenance of social identity. Sahtudene values are being expounded and reinforced in a temporary universe that may be forced into the "real" universe once the values are strong enough to withstand conflict and overcome the older, perhaps unwanted, values of another culture. Games are socially legitimate forms of cultural representation in that they stabilize values and become prevalent in society over time (Cheska, 1984: 242). What is expressed in play and games is no different than what is expressed in culture in other ways. As a culture changes, an institution may become degraded to the point where it is only represented by a rule in a game. The game becomes a culturally representative framework for the functioning of the society at some point in time (Cheska, 1984).

Thus today, many traditional games of kinetic prowess, once used to reinforce individual skills for subsistence hunting and family survival, have become "displays" of traditional culture for the benefit of others. The physical attributes are defined by a relative performance of "best in the event". Some games become prominent at this performance level and give an excellent view of Sahtudene culture. This persistent strength of the culture set is indicated by festival type events

that celebrate traditional aboriginal culture. Everyone is encouraged to attend such events, creating an opportunity to view or take part in the festival. These festivals are for others to see but are not pan-Dene in nature or content.

To analyse and understand the importance of games and game events, it is important to recognize some of the factors involved in the game's existence. Some groups may report a game as existing but no longer played, as did a group of aboriginal people in the Yukon. Residents from Fort Good Hope went to several communities across the Yukon and re-taught the Hand Game. The method of play, rules and strategies had not been passed from generation to generation successfully, and the game had been lost (Field Notes, 1991). Were it not for the skilled members of Fort Good Hope, the Yukon groups may never have reclaimed a part of their culture that had been lost. Other groups may not remember certain games that were once very popular in a particular region and still others may participate in a contemporary form of a game not realizing or remembering its history and importance.

Games of dominant groups may become the games of other groups, replacing traditional games and activities that have evolved throughout a non-dominant group's history. Through a diffusion of information, new games are learned that reflect the values of the dominant group. These new games may not represent a means by which non-dominant groups can promote and reinforce their own societal values. Subsequently, the loss of traditional games and activities as a means of promoting and reinforcing traditional values may ultimately erode the non-dominant group's cultural identity.

Revitalization of Traditional Games

Cultures and people, especially the Sahtudene, have changed, reflective of economic and social influences from a southern Euro-Canadian culture. This cultural domination may be weakening and the strengths of the emerging Sahtudene culture recognized in part through traditional activities. This modern resurgence is unique and must be recognized as such by examining, in a renewed light, the forms, functions and incidence of traditional recreation and sport culture. This is the definition of Sahtudene ethnic identity as it concerns the area of games and recreation.

Changes within cultures occur rapidly, especially given the rapid colonization and more recent decolonization of the North. Assaults of such magnitude on the lives of the Sahtudene have occurred over the last 100 years that they were unable to defend or display their own proud heritage before the next wave of Euro-Canadian influences changed their environment again.

Game events may be seen as a representation of the values and ideals of a society. The importance of games and play in Dene society has not been explored, to its full potential, as an indicator of present culture or as an indicator of cultural change. Recent documentation of traditional aspects of Dene recreation and sport culture presents topics of interest that are more focussed on the role of contemporary sport and recreation within northern communities and not on traditional inventories or functions of Dene games.

The Sahtudene may be able to revitalize their culture in part by using games and recreation to present important aspects relating to the group's values and norms. The foundation on which this revitalization rests are the elders. The knowledge they have must be revived, recorded, and utilized before it is lost to further generations. Native leaders recognized the importance of elders and their knowledge of traditional games and recreational activities in the 1970's. Since that time, however, only sporadic attempts have been made to gather and record traditional games knowledge. The games must indeed be retrieved from those who remember them, and the complete rules for game play must be recorded. Then a link must be made between the games (reconstructed) and both traditional and contemporary Sahtudene values. This path of revitalization and restoration will be an important part of contemporary Sahtudene life and culture.

In 1976, Scott and other researchers attempted to document and reconstruct traditional games and sport events in a select number of Dene communities in the North. Part of this research involved the documentation of traditional activities in several Northern communities based on a series of elders workshops (Scott, 1979a). Subsequent research led to the creation of a comprehensive listing of traditional Dene activities and games as remembered by the elders of the Sahtu region (Scott, 1979a). Recently the research and documents were used in the development of a resource book for the Government of the Northwest Territories (Heine, 1996).

Much of what has been researched by Heine (1996), Helm (1966, 1981), and Scott (1979a) has seen only limited dissemination beyond specific scientific research confines. An overall lack of documented information, combined with limited dissemination of the available documents has limited the exposure of traditional Dene games and recreation, placing Dene culture behind that of the Inuit in terms of traditional games knowledge and promotion. This, in my opinion, has limited the cultural strength of the Dene with respect to identifiable cultural traits.

The marginalization of the Dene is furthered by southern Euro-Canadian games incursion into the North that do little to reinforce or even revive the feelings of traditional cultural involvement in native participants. Indeed, the sports originally chosen for the Arctic Winter Games (A.W.G.) reinforced the dominant culture of the non-Northerners (White Euro-Canadians). Many of the games that occurred at the local, regional or territorial level did little or nothing to present or promote native Sahtudene culture.

The competitive philosophy of the southern games conflicts with the individual performance and group cooperation values of Sahtudene life and games. A competitive hierarchy reinforced the values of the dominant non-northeners and assured that capital would be provided to continue with the games. Funding from territorial and federal programs for sport development was aimed at the promotion and proliferation of southern sports that had been identified by Sport Canada. Traditional native sports were seen as cultural and artistic performances, not as serious sports. Subsequently, funding was not made available for the development of native sports and games. It was not until recently that native values and games were recognized as a necessary part of organized sport in the North. This recognition is now evident in the later development of the Arctic Winter Games, where traditional games have come to occupy a central position.

Recognition of Aboriginal Contexts for Recreation

Recognition of the important role of traditional aboriginal culture and forms of recreation in contemporary society has been lacking. Increasingly, aboriginal communities are seeking ways to incorporate recreation into their culture, often in different forms than found in Euro-Canadian culture. Researchers and native groups have been presenting arguments for the change of

recreation to fit the growing needs of small, predominantly isolated aboriginal communities across Canada and the United States of America (Cole, 1993: 113).

This shift in focus led to a special issue of the *Journal of Applied Recreation and Research*, devoted to leisure and recreation issues of North America's aboriginal people (Reid, 1993: 81). This Journal presents an analysis and development of recreation elements at the community level. The proliferation of representative activities in alternative environments as culturally significant displays of identity are also discussed.

Beyond the significant analysis of the importance of recreation and leisure within a community, the social function with respect to native lifestyles and culture is also examined. Several articles emphasize the importance of changing aboriginal society and the need for professionals to deliver programs and administrative structures based upon an aboriginal frame of reference, not an Euro-Canadian one (Reid, 1993).

Therefore, recreation in aboriginal communities must change to reflect the needs and culture of the people. Importation of foreign structures for administration or programs must not become another set of assimilative forces representing Euro-Canadian ways. Aboriginal culture and values must be learned and used within the context of the small communities, leading to the improved delivery of recreation in a unique environment; programs that meet an aboriginal frame of reference.

Synthesis

This chapter has presented the theoretical framework and construct which are to be used to describe and analyse the traditional games and elements in Sahtudene community recreation in 1991-92. Dacks' devolutionary perspective was introduced as the 'macro' level interpretation of Dene proto-history, colonization, and decolonization used as socio-political context for the present study. Barth's approach to defining ethnic group cultural boundary maintenance and change was summarized as the 'micro' or community level analytical model of choice. Further, a section presented and reviewed the literature in the developing anthropology of play which examines relationships between a society's play and game culture and its ecological adaptation,

social structure, and culture as a whole. Cheska's functional analysis points to the significant roles traditional play and games can have in community development and in discussion of possible implication of this theoretical and literature review for Sahtudene recreation, cultural restoration, and determination. The final section recognizes the contemporary role of recreation in aboriginal communities and the need for significant modifications in the structure for delivery and administration of programs at the community level. The understanding of changing aboriginal society in the 1990's is emphasized.

Chapter Notes

1. The Sahtudene have been sure of their identity long before researchers arrived to label and/or categorize them.

CHAPTER 3
FORT FRANKLIN, A 1991 IMAGE

Introduction

This chapter provides the community ecological context and anthropological and historical background to the ethnographic and analytical description and analysis of Sahtudene games and recreational activity. It also describes the 1991 Fort Franklin community demographics and the setting in which games and recreation occurred.

Geographical Setting

Fort Franklin (Déljne) is situated about 10 kilometres north of the effluent of the Great Bear River on Great Bear Lake (65° 10' N, 123° 25' W). Located in the Mackenzie District of Canada's Northwest Territories, it is a Hamlet of 600 people (seasonally varied) that has become a focus for traditional Dene[1] life for the Sahtu[2] and much of the surrounding Mackenzie Region.

The traditional name for Fort Franklin is Déljne. It is the name, not of a specific location, but rather a reference to the general area around the effluent of the Great Bear River. Residents refer to the area as the place where the Great Bear Lake empties into the Great Bear River [de• li ni•: Head of the river (Osgood, 1975:526)]. The current settlement itself is on the site of the *Fishery* that Osgood (1975:527) identified as "eta i a" (In the shelter of the point) and not in fact at the effluent of the Great Bear River.

Ethnographic Backgrounds

The primary residents of Fort Franklin today are Sahtudene. Made up of people from the Hare, Mountain, Dogrib, Yellowknife and Slave native groups, they have occupied the region around Great Bear Lake for thousands of years. Gradually, they began to reside permanently around the lake and were identified as an autonomous group, the Satudene[3], by Osgood (1932). Although they were a complex compilation of groups from the areas around Great Bear Lake, the Satudene forged an existence and identity unique to the region in which they lived.

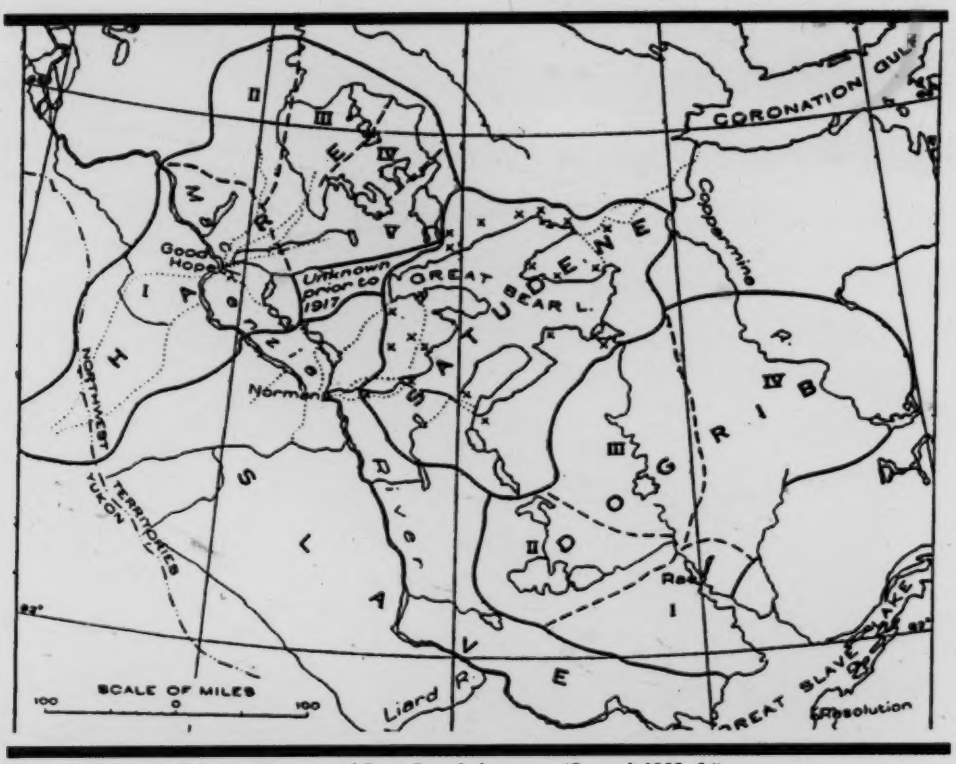

Figure 1. Osgood's *Ethnographic map of Great Bear Lake region (Osgood, 1932: 34).*

The native language of Fort Franklin is primarily Northern Slavey, a dialect of the Slave language[4]. The Slave language has several common features with other Athapaskan languages of the Northwest Territories, Yukon Territories, Alberta, Alaska and British Columbia, as well as having similar cultural traits.

Contact History

During its existence, Fort Franklin has been home to groups of natives from across the region. Dogrib, Hare, Mountain, Slavey, Gwich'in and Yellowknife Indians all traded into the Fort during its existence. Explorers, traders and missionaries have resided around Great Bear Lake since the late-1700's. Their writings and correspondence have provided glimpses into the lives

and personal values of the residents of Great Bear Lake. Except for the Sahtudene, few people maintained permanent residency in the region until the early 1900's (Morris, 1972: 62).

In 1799 Duncan Livingston established a post, called Bear Lake Castle (Morris, 1973: 58), on Great Bear Lake a short distance from the exit of Great Bear River. Livingston had established the first post on the Mackenzie River proper for the Northwest Company in 1796 (Wentzel, 1899-90: pp. 58 in Morris, 1973). These two posts served most of the Mackenzie Valley natives and reflected the Northwest Company's attempts to increase its influence and control over trade in the region. Explorers and traders had come into the region starting in about 1771 with Hearne (Hearne, 1795). Their proximity to the Sahtudene, and subsequent further encroachment on traditional territories may have caused the Sahtudene culture to change prior to the arrival of Livingston on Great Bear Lake (Morris, 1973: 58).

The North-West and the New North-West (also named the XY Company) companies had competed for trade in the area since about 1800, the time of the white man's arrival in this area (Osgood, 1975:527). Alexander Mackenzie, a partner in the New North-West Company, traded at the Bear Lake Castle site until 1805. Several independent traders maintained a presence in the general area of Fort Franklin sporadically through the late 1800's (Franklin, 1828: 66-7). Even the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) moved its post from its Fort Norman location on the Mackenzie river to Fort Franklin in 1864 (retaining the name Fort Norman in the new location). It remained there until 1872 (Osgood, 1975:527,538; Duchaussois, 1923:254).

The relocation of trading posts and forts has caused some confusion geographically but was a common activity for early traders. The trading posts and forts had to be in suitable locations. Proximity to trapping lines, hunting territories and migratory routes was important to control trade and maximize results within the region. Seasonal variations often dictated the relocation of the posts and forts.

Traditional Sahtudene Life

At the time of contact with southern adventurers, the people living in the Great Bear Lake region were egalitarian hunter-gatherers living in small extended family units. Men were the hunters

and women formed the underlying support structure for the men's efforts. Small, extended family units effectively limited the needs of each group and allowed the seasonal variations in food supply to be accommodated (Franklin, 1828; Morris, 1972 and 1973; Osgood, 1932; Richardson, 1851).

The Sahtudene person was autonomous, living a life of subsistence where the present was important and the future was rarely considered. The highly mobile family unit, which was the base for this lifestyle, was stratified by gender, age, and ability. Men and young boys traditionally hunted for caribou, moose and small mammals across a wide territory[5]. Women and young girls attended to the needs of the family members, especially the men. Traditional cooking, clothes making, child rearing, and attending to the results of hunts (skinning, tanning, drying meat etc.) were some of the other duties of the females (Asch, 1988; Rushforth, 1984).

The traditional lifestyle of the Sahtudene (hunting, fishing, and gathering) allowed the individual, family, or small group to survive. Food was consumed immediately after the kill, with the hunters often eating their fill before returning to tell the family of their success (Franklin, 1828). Some meat or fish was dried for later consumption but caching or other methods of food preservation and storage were not used (Osgood, 1932: 37-8; Richardson, 1851: 290-1). The attitude of immediate gratification of hunger without consideration for future needs reinforced their lifestyle of nomadic hunting and gathering.

Trapping, one of the main reasons for the nomadic lifestyle, was used to obtain small animals that provided food and warm furs for clothing. Larger animals such as caribou and moose were hunted and used for clothing and camp needs. The caribou was the main staple for the Sahtudene, used to provide food, clothing, household utensils, and hunting equipment among other things. The Sahtudene were opportunists, taking advantage of the environment, seasonal offerings and individual prowess. Their hunts were based on season, proximity to known habitats, migratory patterns and population strengths and diversity (Morris, 1973; Osgood, 1932).

Stratification of the family and small groups was reflected in many aspects of Sahtudene culture. Good hunters were leaders, but they could maintain their position only as long as they retained their ability to provide for the group. Many Sahtudene stories talk about a leader being a wise

man (Blondin, 1990), but leaders were usually only attributed with one aspect (hunting skill, traditional knowledge, intelligence, etc.) that conveyed their leadership to others. Increasing contact with traders and trading posts led to the development of trading chiefs (usually individuals designated by Factors) that eventually led to a formalized hierarchy structure, non-existent before the incursion of outsiders (Richardson, 1851: 252; Morris, 1973: 71).

If men were the hunters and leaders, then women and young girls were the support net for the Sahtudene family. They gathered foodstuffs, attended to young children, and prepared and tended to the camp. Men would go ahead of the rest of the family to scout a location or hunt for food. Women were left to pack camp and haul everything to the new location. Following the men's trail, women took days to reach each destination. They relied primarily on drymeat and other gathered materials to survive on the long, labour-intensive journey.

Once the women arrived at the new destination they would have to assemble the camp and prepare for the hunter's return. They were required to prepare food for all the members of the family and extended family. As vital as their skills were, their role and status in Sahtudene society was noticeably different from and subservient to that of the men (Morris, 1973: 74).

Stratification and classification of men as leaders juxtaposed the position of women as followers and property. Franklin commented on the changing and relative position of women in Chipewyan and Copper Indian groups trading into Fort Franklin.

> I was glad to find that the Chipewyan and the Copper Indians were at length employing dogs to drag their sledges...had for several years past thrown this labourious and degrading occupation on the poor women...these Indians no longer beat their wives in the cruel manner to which they had been formerly accustomed...
>
> Franklin, 1828: 303

With the coming of traders, missionaries and government, their traditional ways of life changed considerably. Some changes occurred rapidly, others more slowly. It is now obvious that the traditional Sahtudene way of life and its values have been forever changed by the incursion of a foreign life-style.

A Colonial Economy

> ...the wage economy of the North is a colonial economy, directed by multinational corporations and the federal government. Its staples basis necessarily makes it a boom-and-bust economy and its lack of internal economic links acts as a brake on its development. These factors make the North economically weak and dependent; thus its vulnerability to outside forces is perpetuated.
>
> Dacks, 1981: 20

The wage economy that has given much to the material basis for southern Canadian lifestyles has not been as fruitful for the North. It has failed to stabilize the northern economy and often conflicts with traditional activities and values (Rushforth, 1977: 32). Offering sporadic employment, in specialized fields, the wage economy often conflicts with traditional beliefs concerning land use. A history of megaproject "build and leave" or natural resource "plunder" has not provided the long term, stable economy that has developed in some regions of the South. It seems that the peak and valley wave form of prosperity and scarcity is all that has taken root in the North. After the initial projects are completed, spin-offs are often short lived or limited in size and scope[6]. There may be limited long term opportunities for residents once a project has finished (Asch, 1977: 59).

These types of economic situations do little to promote stable, long term, economically significant employment. Basing a local economy on unstable, non-sustainable projects with specialized labour requirements[7] has not assisted local residents in obtaining or maintaining suitable living conditions or lifestyles (Rushforth, 1977: 43-44).

Native groups are again regaining control of their ecosystem through land claims, subsequently gaining more control of their lives and culture in the process. These land claims, which often give natives control over land use, hamper non-renewable resource harvesting megaprojects such as oil and gas extraction. Large corporations, often with federal government backing, are no longer able to extract non-renewable resources and depart without the involvement of the Sahtudene and their consent to the activity. This process of involvement is being tested through

the development of diamond mines around Great Slave Lake. Development of this nature could help bring long term benefits to northern aboriginal people.

As the land claims are settled and the transfer of power from the Federal Government to Native Groups and Territorial Governments (Yukon, Northwest Territories and soon Nunavut) takes place, traditional activities could be promoted and linked to the development of a stable economic activity base within the Territories themselves. These changes, in part, may contribute to a new beginning for the Sahtudene. Their vulnerable state of existence, controlled externally, is changing to self-determination and internal control. Continued reinforcement of Sahtudene values while undergoing change will be essential if the Sahtudene are to resist continuing southern influences.

Contemporary Change in the NWT

With the coming division of the Northwest Territories the Sahtudene require a recognition and revival of indigenous knowledge and traditional values to take the NWT into the next era without being overshadowed by Nunavut. As urbanization and now devolution occur, the lives of the Dene in the Sahtu region are changing. Exposure to goods and values from the South have led to changes in Sahtudene values. Wage positions have reinforced the Dene's movement off the land and linked it to settlement living. Reduced demand for fur and associated goods has pushed many Dene into settlements, seeking employment. Government programs for training have reduced the need for traditional skills once valued for a comfortable lifestyle and replaced them with wage-labour market oriented skills (Dacks 1981, Crowe 1992).

Ownership of material wealth has become important to the Sahtudene. NWT Housing Association Program (H.A.P.) housing, snowmobiles, clothing, and food of a non-traditional nature have replaced the environment based supply of goods. Animal skin clothing and outer wear has been replaced by blue jeans and nylon shells with "NWT", "Nike" or the polar bear[8] printed across the shoulders. Meat from the caribou, moose, and beaver has been almost completely replaced with ground beef. These items and many more, not available through ecologically traditional methods, must be purchased, reinforcing the wage-based economy and settlement lifestyle.

The Sahtudene have been influenced by missionaries, explorers and trappers, economic postings (agents), media, and other elements of southern Euro-Canadian culture. Often well-meaning, each of the many elements has contributed to an erosion of dominant Sahtudene values, and this has resulted in an assimilation of the dominant value system from the South. At present, the Sahtudene, through land claims, economic ventures, and social changes[9], are attempting to revitalize and strengthen their traditional system of values in the self-determination of their future.

Fort Franklin Demographics for 1991

Fort Franklin is a traditional community of 604 people, located 544 air kilometres northwest of Yellowknife (refer to Appendix A: Déline Statistical Profile) . Log cabins, NWT Housing Association houses (HAP)[10], fishing sheds, boats and short scrub cover the shoreline (refer to Appendix B: "Terry Fox Run" Route map). The Roman Catholic Church and Mission are clearly visible from the river as one approaches by boat. By air, the whole community is visible, sprawling up a short jutting section of shoreline along Great Bear Lake. A small lake to the west, called "Little Lake" by residents, and the effluent of the Great Bear River are also visible from the air.

Certain features of the settlement are similar to those found across the Arctic in other small communities. Housing ranges from brand new 1991 H.A.P. houses to old log homes and canvas tents. The airport's gravel runway, the dump, fuel tanks and the community complex all stand out because of their immense size relative to their surroundings. Roads are gravel and well packed, twisting between the buildings and out to the dump and fuel tank fields. Foot paths criss-cross the landscape between the houses; any two points seem to be linked by a path. Fort Franklin is like many settlements across the North, isolated in the midst of vast areas of snow, tundra and scrub forest, yet the size of Great Bear Lake is ominous, dwarfing the surrounding landscape. This lake provides life for its residents. Its function and importance to Sahtudene life are never taken for granted by residents.

Transportation, food, and weather control are but a few of the functions that Great Bear Lake fulfils in Sahtudene life. The lake and its waterways allow the Sahtudene to travel great

distances in search of game with relative ease. Fish and wildlife that rely on the lake and its waterways for survival are sustenance for the travelling Sahtudene hunters and fishermen. The barometric pressure systems created by the size of the lake influence the seasonal variations in temperature and precipitation.

Many of the amenities that are taken for granted in the south are present, but modified to suit the climate and conditions found in Fort Franklin. Complete utilities {power, fuel oil, sewage (trucked) and water (trucked)} are available year-round. The medical station has three full-time nurses and support staff that attend to resident needs 24 hours a day. A doctor visits from Norman Wells every three weeks and medical emergencies are flown to Yellowknife or Inuvik. Retail goods are available from either the Great Bear Cooperative or the Northern store. Two stores are a luxury not often found in small northern communities, most only have a Northern Store. The school has programs from kindergarten to grade 9 (grades 10 to 12 must be taken in Yellowknife or Inuvik) and the GNWT Adult Education program is localized to provide for adult education and training programs.

The local government is divided into two autonomous councils , a unique situation in the North. The residents are represented by a Band Council and a Hamlet Council[11]. The Band Council attends to local needs, traditional activities and land claims. The Fort Franklin Dene Band coordinates its activities with other Dene groups across Canada through the Dene Nation and deals with all matters relating to the Federal Government, the Indian Act and Treaty 11 matters. The Hamlet Council represents the residents in municipal affairs and coordinates its activities and programs with the Government of the Northwest Territories.

The Recreation Committee for the Incorporated Hamlet of Fort Franklin is a Standing Committee of the Hamlet Council. It was created by Hamlet Bylaw. Members of the committee may total seven or more and are chosen from among community residents, with terms of the members being one year. Once the members have been appointed by Council motion, they meet as the Recreation Committee and vote to determine the President and Vice-president positions.

Recreation Committee meetings are usually monthly, with the agenda being set by the President in advance of the meeting. Members are made aware of the agenda and come prepared to

address the specified issues. In Fort Franklin the meetings provided a formal opportunity for members to discuss recreation in the community and suggest programs or projects that the Recreation Director should address. Meetings are attended by all members as well as the Recreation Director and a Hamlet Counsellor. Regular reports are made by the Recreation Director to the Hamlet Council to advise them of issues and ongoing developments in the community.

The creation of this committee is mandated by the GNWT. Without it the municipality will not qualify for any funding from the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA, 1994). Given the high costs of materials and maintenance in the North, a community relies on this form of funding to maintain the facilities and programs they have and to obtain future funding. This creates a situation where the committee is relatively inactive, except in that its formal existence guarantees the availability of GNWT financial assistance. With an inactive or only somewhat active Recreation Committee the Recreation Director's workload is often exhausting, requiring more work to present and support recreation opportunity within the community than if the committee was more active.

Synthesis

This chapter has set the stage upon which ethnographic images of traditional elements of Fort Franklin's 1991-92 recreation life will be presented. The general ecological and geographic setting provides a backdrop for describing contemporary leisure and recreation facilities and activity venues. A brief anthropological sketch situates the Sahtu within the Dene and Northern Athapaskan linguistic group in general. A historical overview provides the political, economic and socio-cultural context which shaped and constrained community recreation in Fort Franklin in 1991-92 when the author began his duties as Recreation Director.

Chapter Notes

1. Dene is the Slavey word for *The People*. Petitot (1878:588) identified nine variations of the word Dene that occurred among the tribes and dialects of Athapaskan speaking peoples. Déné; Tènè; Adènè; Danè; Dunè; Adæ na; Dnainè; Dindjié; Dindjitch were found to be identical in meaning with the name *Man*. Dene translates to the particle (prefix) *De-*, that which is, and a root *-nné; -nni; -nan; -nun,* meaning earth, land or terrestrial.

2. The word *Sahtu* refers to the region and communities around Great Bear Lake and the Mackenzie River in the west-central area of the NWT. The word Sahtu breaks into *sa* meaning bear and *tu* meaning water. The addition of an h in the word is more recent and perhaps reflects phonetic variations in spelling and pronunciation.

3. Petitot (1878) refers to the residents of the region surrounding Great Bear Lake as the Sa-tchô-t'ugottinê. Although not specifying one particular group of Dene, he lists groups that were know to frequent the area surrounding the lake at certain times of the year. In 1928 Osgood called the permanent residents of Great Bear Lake the Satudene (Sahtudene) or Great Bear Lake Indians. These were the Sahtudene that had year round residence and a personal association or link with the lake. The *sa-tu-go- t'i-ne* (literally translated to Bear Lake Indians) (Osgood, 1932:35) inhabited an area around Great Bear Lake. They had geographical boundaries with the Hare, Slave and Dogrib groups.

4. Northern Slavey dialect of the Slave language is used for personal communication between residents of Fort Franklin. English, however, is also a dominant language necessary for communication with many of the non-Sahtudene residents of Fort Franklin, and other communities, businesses and governments outside the Sahtu (Field Notes, 1991).

5. There are three major caribou populations that the Sahtudene relied upon for sustenance. The Woodland Caribou are found in scattered groups in the northern boreal forests and mountains around the Mackenzie Region. The Barren Ground Caribou are found in two herds that have migratory areas around Great Bear Lake. The Bluenose Herd spends the winter and summer along the north shores of Great Bear Lake and is home in the Colville Lake area. The Bathurst Herd winters south of Great Bear Lake and up the Dease Arm. Another section of this herd is found east of Great Bear Lake beyond the tree-line, focussing its population density in the Bathurst Inlet area. Traditionally, these three populations provided for the majority of the food and material needs of the Sahtudene.

Today, the hunting of caribou is more localized around Fort Franklin (Rushforth, 1984). Some parties and individuals travel to points on the lake for community hunting, taking advantage of the migrating herds of Barren Ground caribou. Woodland caribou are more popular, although less in number, for modern Sahtudene hunters. Woodland caribou travel within the proximity of seasonal bush camp sites, making it easier for hunters to track the animal without extended travelling. Exploitation of these resources during the annual cycle of hunting and fishing, combined with small game trapping and local vegetation harvesting, permitted the Sahtudene to travel around the region with the changing seasons and food availability.

6. Asch (1977: 59-60) discussed this in the context of the petroleum industry and their views proactively towards their eventual departure and the results thereof on local economy.

7. Specialized skill training as a condition of employment is unfair to local communities who lack the expertise and facilities with which to train or upgrade skill levels that are required for specific jobs. This creates an 'us against them' and 'have versus have not' attitude. Unskilled Sahtudene and those who lack project specific skills find themselves unable to compete with imported labourers from the South.

8. The polar bear referred to here is the white image of the polar bear used as a symbol of the North. Even though polar bears are found predominantly in the northern Arctic and around the Hudson's Bay, its status and symbolism of the North is entrenched in Canadian minds. It has little significance for the Dene beyond being a symbol of the Territory in which they live. With the splitting of the NWT in 1997, it may have even less significance to the Dene in their newly separated land.

9. Social change in Fort Franklin is directed at many elements of community life. Unemployment exceeds the national average, substance abuse pervades all aspects of Sahtudene society, and the cost of basic necessities often exceeds earned wages or traditional resource availability. Alcohol and other substances are often used as a means of escape for many residents of Fort Franklin. These abuses transcend age, gender, education, employment, and other social constructs.

There are several groups attempting to address and modify the destructive nature of some social problems. The Basic Awareness Program, Roman Catholic Church and Youth Group, the nursing unit, and the Hamlet's Department of Recreation attempt to provide elements of support

that either directly or indirectly lifestyle choices and change. These groups, and many individuals, provide alternatives and modifications through choices, each group challenging the social problems of the small northern community.

10. H.A.P. stands for Homeowner Association Program. In the Northwest Territories housing is expensive. Through the H.A.P. Housing Programs, people are given the opportunity to purchase the materials required to build a house. Some of the costs involved (such as transportation and materials) are partially subsidized for the purchased. The materials are boxed and send from the south and fulfilment of certain aspects of the house's assembly and completion are part of the H.A.P. agreement. This program and the houses available to consumers is very successful. Houses can be framed and externally finished during the summer and the interior finished during the fall and early winter. Community labour and tradespeople are an intensive an integral part of the program. Without the program and it's community level administration, many people and families would be unable to own a home in the north and have to continue to pay very high utility and maintenance costs on rental units.

11. In 1992 these two separate Councils amalgamated to form one Council that represents all aspects of Fort Franklin life.

CHAPTER 4

A YEAR IN THE RECREATIONAL LIFE OF FORT FRANKLIN

This chapter is a continuation of the demographic, ecological, socio-cultural, and historical portrait of Fort Franklin provided in the previous chapter. A broader, more seasonal image of life within this small northern community will be discussed in order to provide insight into the rich cultural aspects, and the community implications, of recreation in Fort Franklin. A schedule of events, that occurred during 1991 and 1992, is included to situate, and interpret, the participation in traditional and southern forms of recreation. As this chapter will indicate, schedules are relatively flexible and are constantly adapted to reflect the community's needs. The recreation schedule provided is not the fixed, static form seen in southern communities, rather, it is a schedule of activities that involves all aspects of society, not just the specific sport being planned.

I begin this chapter with my impressions, as a newcomer to Fort Franklin and to the position of Recreation Director (refer to Appendix A), of community life during the seasonal cycle of climatic change and ecological adaptation within a seemingly harsh but remarkable environment. My impressions are interwoven with a look at a year of recreational, social and cultural activities, providing the groundwork necessary for later analysis of case studies. These impressions were included in order to enrich and situate the description, as well as to provide insight into my lived experiences. I have also included weather and other ecological descriptions, transportation, economic activities and other social occurrences. It is hoped that this format will provide the reader with a more complete picture of life within this small northern community.

Recreation Activity Scheduling

When the lake freezes the community starts to feel that winter is coming and preparations are begun for the winter's activities. Before the activities can get underway all the scheduling headaches occur.

Scheduling (refer to Appendix A: Recreation Program Cycle for 1991-92 in Fort Franklin) of events and facilities for the 1991-92 year varied from complex to simple. The three main

facilities (the Arena/Hall Complex, the school gymnasium and the Culture Centre), as well as the numerous seasonal venues were at the disposal of the community and all of its residents. Modification of schedules became common-place, and acceptance of these sudden changes and the trading of sport-designated blocks was necessary in order to function effectively as the Recreation Director.

One of my first duties as a recreation professional was to ensure that the facilities were operational and that the programs being developed and scheduled were suitable to the community's needs. Fort Franklin was a community without schedules; drop-in and impromptu events ruled the scheduling with a first come, first to choose the sport or event.

The Recreation Committee felt that it was best, initially, to schedule programs that presented a variety of events to a wide range of resident needs. Everything from moms and tots arena time, to adult men's volleyball should be included in this schedule. As Recreation Director I was required to oversee, organize, promote, evaluate, and administer all programs, as well as plan for future events. This included supervision of different events held within all the facilities, a job for which no one else wanted responsibility.

Scheduling for facilities usually lasted as long as the cycle of interest for an activity lasted. This wave of extreme interest in an activity or event followed by a significant and sudden drop in interest, followed by the next phase of extreme interest (for the same activity or a new one) became part of the scheduling. Events and facilities were scheduled to maintain a semblance of control over the activities within the facilities, limiting the conflict between groups. The frequency of changes had to be timed to primarily reflect the expressed recreational wants of the men, with the rest of the community's wants being of secondary concern.

In the late Fall, before the arena was open for hockey, the men wanted to use the gym every evening to play floor hockey. It was seen to be of little consequence that the gymnasium was being used by the youth for volleyball. The youth did not appreciate the ousting they received and the coordinator of the Youth Group made me very aware of this. She also went to the Band to complain. I received a call from the Chief to examine the scheduling, making sure to include times for the youths and not just the men. I then implemented a schedule that gave the youth

time in the gym later in the evening. The result was a complaint from the men that, despite having the prime time, they were not able to continue as long as they would like as the youth were displacing them.

Once the arena was open the scheduling began; men, women and youth were fit in to a weekly schedule. The women, to the best of their ability, were able to muster the numbers to use the facility on the one night a week that the arena was scheduled for them. One of the many schedules included one evening time slot for women's broomball per week. The first evening twenty women came out to participate. The next week they had ten, the week after six and by the fourth week it was cancelled and the men played pick-up hockey again. A new schedule was devised and the women were given a different time slot. During this new time slot the older men, who often were not allowed on the ice with the hockey players, barged into the women's time. This gave rise to the necessary enforcement of the schedule by the recreation personnel on duty, although the recreation personnel were often sympathetic to the primary offenders. The men would taunt the women, and the women would tire of this and give in to the taunting and stronger wills of the men, men who wished to reinforce the gender roles of the community.

Another program that was cancelled was the tots and moms skating time. Fathers wanted their boys to play hockey and rather than let the boys on the ice in the evening (when the men wanted the ice time) they forced a schedule change based on what they felt was limited participation by moms and little kids. Women's broom ball and volleyball became co-ed with the older men or the youth taking part respectively. Even Saturday morning kid's time in the gym was eventually taken over by the men to play basketball. It was not until the Recreation Committee started to support and enforce their own schedules that groups started to respect the rights of others to time without interruption.

In the community it was often necessary for the women to make special requests for specific events to be scheduled in order to receive facility time. The pressure put upon the women to keep them away from recreational activities and focus on attending to other duties is often greater than many can withstand. Men often go out of their way to keep the women out. It sounds quite simple to create opportunities for women within a schedule, yet reality often does not enter into the intentions of a schedule. Women may request special times in the evening to

get out and "play" but that does not mean that it will happen. They often have the sole responsibility for looking after the kids in the day and in the evening. The men go out and socialize while the women stay home. To get away from the family and have time to oneself is near to impossible for most women. Many men will not stay with the kids.

When the women do get the opportunity to get out they often get a teenager to attend to the kids. When out, the women are crowded by the men at any venue the women choose to visit and are heckled as some men force their way into the event/game. Most of the older men, with the more traditional belief that a woman's place is in the home, attending to the kids and family, are the first to barge into the game. It is often difficult for many of the older women to resist the pressures involved in such actions, resulting in their leaving the game. Those who are able to stand up to the pressures are often younger and single parents. Eventually even the younger women are unable to continue due to the lack of women participants. The older women's leaving starts the demise of an event. Eventually the men take over and justify their new participation, and the changing of the game to their choice, by saying that the women were not interested and "chose" to leave. This attitude is one of "Why waste the facility time, the men should play"...and off they go. The opportunities and scheduling required to accommodate the requests and needs of women in the community are impeded by the traditional structure of beliefs expressed by many men in the community and accepted by many of the women.

Winter (November to March)

- dark more than light
- cold and windy with drifting snow
- winter roads open
- visiting more popular
- winter hunting and trapping
- ice fishing
- Arena activities
    - hockey
    - broom ball
    - skating
- Gymnasium activities
    - floor hockey
    - volleyball
    - basketball
    - badminton
    - Brownies
- Hall activities
    - Christmas feast and activities
    - wedding celebration (1991)
    - New Year's celebration
    - bingo
    - drum dances (formal or display)
    - teen (modern) dances
    - family and community events
    - Territorial and Supreme court
- Culture Centre (opened February, 1991)
    - drumming
    - dancing
    - Hand Games
    - teen (modern) dances
    - family and community events
- Other Activities
    - spring carnival planning
    - cross country skiing

Figure 2. Winter schedule of events (November to March).

When the weather cools, the wind off the lake brings a feeling of impending change to a cold and dark period of the cycle in Sahtudene life. The activities of the summer give way to the activities

of the fall and the coming of winter cold. Fishing gear is prepared for storage, boats are cleaned and placed on racks, away from the crushing ice of the soon to be frozen lake.

In the Sahtu, winter is not a season - it is a period of life. The white snow and the cold wind combine to create an environment that is both beautiful and dangerous. The amount of water that flows from the lake to the river is incredible. In a channel barely 50 metres across, the water continues to flow even during the coldest of Northern weather. The water in this channel does not freeze over, nor do the banks collect ice. People engaged in winter activities and travel are warned away from the area for fear of their breaking through thin ice or falling into the open river and being swept away. Beyond the headwaters of the river, the water freezes over forming a winter ice path that cuts through the land and eventually joins with the Mackenzie River.

Survival was once the most important part of living in the North. Today modern technology has reduced many of the dangers. Activities that go on during this period of diminished light and warmth centre around the community and being together. The community is the warmth that helps the winter pass more quickly.

Winter sets in when the ice on Great Bear Lake freezes. It takes only a few days for the ice to be thick enough to walk on and only a few weeks to develop strength enough for vehicle travel. Residents want the ice to freeze without a snowfall. If snow falls onto a body of water as it is freezing it reduces the strength of the resulting ice layer. Clear ice formations are the first sign of a good beginning for strong ice. Strong ice indicates a longer period of safe travel before the ice weakens and starts to melt in the spring.

The freezing of the lake is a sign of impending recreation and fun for the community. Activities abound on the fresh, smooth ice. Skating, pulling games, sliding, pick-up shinny, tag and a multitude of made up games take up much of the light hours during the first freeze of the year. Pulling games involve kids taking turns pulling others around the ice. Ropes are attached to sleds, pieces of plastic, or to anything that will slide, and the number of participants is only limited by the number of people who can climb on the moving object.

Skating takes you for miles, it seems. The freezing of the ice is rapid and the area is immense. It is about seven kilometres across the lake from the community to the river outlet. Often you do not realize how far you have gone until you stop and look back and around at the scenery. Fort Franklin is just a group of houses and buildings on the shore and there is nothing to be heard but the wind across the lake and the distant sound of people on the ice by the shoreline. If the ice has formed without snow then its surface is like glass. With no boards or barriers and no music to set a tempo, you can travel almost unimpeded and even skate with some sense of mastery in the silence of the North.

Within this space and time there is danger. You must be aware of uneven freezing that can halt your progress, soft spots and even open water. It is not until you stop and look back to see how far you have gone that you realize that you must travel that same great distance to return home. If you do not remain constantly aware of how far you have gone you will be tired and far from home.

Winter Facilities

The winter of 1990-91 saw the opening of a new arena and hall complex in Fort Franklin. Residents were excited about the potential activity in the new complex, especially in the arena. Before the erection of the sheltered facilities, any activity that involved ice occurred primarily under the canopy of the elements. Residents made use of the frozen lake and exposed rinks in order to play hockey, broom ball, and other winter activities. The shelter of the arena would extend the range of activities and their duration, giving more opportunity to residents during the cold winter months.

Indoor activity was well supported by the gymnasiums that were present in both the old and new schools. An old community hall, demolished by the time of my arrival, was the venue for drumming, dancing, meeting, movies and other indoor oriented activities. Indoor activity increased in the winter, but the venues varied based on community motivations and preferences. In 1991-92 the arena, hall, gymnasium, Youth Drop-In Centre, and Culture Centre provided many opportunities to stay warm and enjoy the companionship of friends while recreating. A

wide variety of activities, some old and some new, were enjoyed throughout the year, but especially so during the cold winter months.

During 1991-92 the most popular winter activity for the men and boys was hockey. Every night a game or scrimmage occurred (and was eventually scheduled). Initially, an informal drop-in league was created, making use of the people who had played the most in the previous drop-in sessions. The informal nature of play progressed from drop-in to small group games, to the creation of a Fort Franklin Hockey Association (with membership in the NWT Hockey Association) in October, 1991.

The opportunity to play hockey in the shelter of the arena allowed residents to learn and play hockey to a greater extent than had been possible when they were limited by the environment. More importantly though, it allowed residents to invite, and to travel to, other communities to play. Tournaments (involving hockey for men and volleyball for women) became monthly events held throughout the region during the winter.

When the ice is ready in the arena, the men and boys move to the arena and the women are given the vacant gymnasium times. The youth of the community can also take advantage of the vacancies in the gym, but must coordinate many of their activities with the women's updated schedule.

The ice in the shelled arena is ready for use shortly after the ice on the lake is frozen (early November). By this time the men's teams are picked and their league is scheduled. Women are anxious to play broom ball and the kids just want to skate and play on the ice out of the cold. The teachers book ice times for physical education classes, and, after school, by four o'clock, boys with skates, helmets and sticks want to get onto the ice to play hockey. The community comes to watch the men's teams play every night, sometimes league play and sometimes just pick-up. Older men were eventually given a night to themselves, mostly to stop them from interfering with the women's time allotment, and women have one night of broom ball a week. If the doors of the arena are open people will come and participate in the activities going on, or just watch and visit.

Winter Travel as Recreation

The Sahtudene rely heavily on the snowmobile for travel, work and play. Snowmobiles reduce travel time between points, getting men onto the land to hunt and trap, and getting families out for winter picnics and other traditional winter activities. Within the community there is no such thing as a road for a snowmobile. Any path wide enough to fit a snowmobile is the path that must be taken to complete a journey from one point to another. Snowmobile paths crisscross the community and leave their distinct tracks around all the houses. It is not uncommon to have a snowmobile fly past your front window as the driver waves to you in your living room.

A part of coming of age for young boys is often permission to use the snowmobile to travel around the community. At any time a seven to nine year old will whiz by out of control in an attempt to learn how to drive the machine and thus impress his friends. Women drive snowmobiles when their men (the ones who own most of the machines) say it is okay, ie. they have not thought up a reason to use it for themselves. Young girls do not drive snowmobiles.

Winter is the time to travel, hunt and enjoy community life. The ice and snow also provide a surface that is ideal for extended travel. Winter travel is more direct and expedient than summer travel by boat on the open waterways of the region (limited access is afforded to boats as they can only land at suitable locations and must be abandoned or carried if land travel is required). Snow and ice also provide travellers with a sure footing for snowshoes. The deciduous trees, thick underbrush and swampy marshlands around Great Bear Lake make travelling by foot almost impossible during the summer months.[1]

Winter brings a unique opportunity to many communities in the North. The coming of winter means the coming of travel to and from many communities in the region. It means the coming of the winter road which is the only access to many small communities in the North and is vital to their survival. The Sahtu communities depend on the winter roads to bring supplies enough to last a year or more. Air travel is the only way to enter the community until the winter road is in place, and air travel is expensive.

The Winter Road

The winter road is an important part of Fort Franklin. As noted earlier, the road provides a path for people to come to Fort Franklin and residents to go to other communities. The road does more than allow access for freight to the community. People travel, staying with friends, family and others, visiting and partaking of the hospitalities that each community has to offer.

Winter roads in the region follow the Mackenzie River from Wrigley up to Norman Wells and through to Fort Norman. In Fort Norman the road is split with branches going north to Fort Good Hope and east to Fort Franklin. The road to Fort Franklin follows the Bear River to the effluent of Great Bear Lake, then across the lake to the community.

The roads are usually gravel or dirt tracks that have been graded smooth. Snow, packed and graded, formed the route, with ice bridges being relied upon to ford streams and small rivers. The ice bridges were usually the indicators of the roads durability and season, when these temporary structures start to melt the roads will be closed. The roads are officially opened and closed by the GNWT Department of Transport, meaning that they are suitable for the heavy freight traffic that brings goods to communities across the Arctic.

Community residents leave their homes with the opening of the winter road and take holidays, travelling south to Yellowknife or Hay River, then slowly back up the Mackenzie Valley to return home just as the winter road is closed. Many others take weekend trips to other communities to visit or just get out on the land for a picnic.

For the people of Fort Franklin, many activities move indoors in the winter. Events in the Dene Cultural Centre, school gymnasium, Arena/Hall, youth drop-in centre, mission, Basic Awareness house, restaurant and in homes become more prominent. Buildings become the centre of the community as people hurry to get out of the cold. Events are arranged to avoid overlap and community spirit is often at a high. Telephones ring constantly as new gatherings and events occur around the community. Visitors are constantly arriving on the winter road and reunions between friends and family are numerous.

Although Hand Games and drumming are activities that occur year round, the winter road and the winter cold bring more people into the Centre for the warmth, visiting and life that these activities bring to the long, cold nights. The men hand game, the women talk and the kids play. People come and go as the night passes, bringing wood for the stove; men pick up a drum and join in support of a hand game player; someone will get more coffee and pop from the Co-op; someone will bring drymeat. The community comes together, and all are welcome.

Spring (March to May)

- days start to get longer
- sunny days with snow on the land beginning to melt
- winter roads close
- visiting less popular
- snowmobiles travel on lake ice (boats from land to ice)
- Arena activities (ice begins to melt in May)
  - hockey
  - skating
  - broom ball
- Gymnasium activities
  - floor hockey
  - volleyball
  - basketball
  - Brownies
- Hall activities
  - bingo
  - drum dances (formal or display)
  - teen (modern) dances
  - family and community events
  - Territorial court
- Culture Centre
  - drumming
  - dancing
  - Hand Games
  - teen (modern) dances
  - family and community events
- Other Activities
  - Spring Carnival

Figure 3. Spring schedule of events (March to May).

Spring is a time to clean up the community. The snow of the winter has provided a hiding place for a multitude of items. As the snow melts these items are revealed along with the scars on the land. The community joins in by declaring a two day period as clean up time. Businesses, families and other organizations divide the community into sections and pick up the refuse that has been revealed by the melting snow. Families burn off the dead grasses and small shrubs from around the houses. Landscape around commercial buildings is cleaned (often of the winter construction remnants) and the property burned clean.

As the ice starts to melt on the lake people prepare for water travel. Boats, kickers, fishing and hunting equipment, and items that need maintenance after a winter of storage are attended to.

With the coming of warmer weather a spirit of renewal is felt, and the community welcomes the change from winter. Gatherings become very important to renew acquaintances with people from other communities who did not, or could not, travel during the cold periods. Spring carnivals are held in each community and are coordinated so that residents of each community in the Sahtu can attend the events being held in the other communities.

In addition to the planning of a spring carnival, the community undertakes a community hunt. The band organizes and coordinates this spring caribou hunt; Fort Franklin's 1991 spring community hunt was comprised of 15 men aged 17 to 50+. The total meat obtained was enough for community needs (administration of "need" was performed by the Band Council) until February, 1992. A community freezer, supported through Federal, Territorial, Band and Municipal funding, stores the meat, obtained from the hunt, year round to ensure that no person or family in Fort Franklin will go without meat during times of hardship. Two additional diesel powered freezer units are located on Great Bear Lake, across from Fort Franklin, and are maintained by the community in conjunction with the Department of Renewable Resources (GNWT). These freezer units are primarily used by individual hunters, or smaller groups, to cache their meat without fear of spoilage.

For some, this period of ice melting is a time not to hunt caribou but rather to go after the smaller game; following their trap lines using snowmobiles and boats. Boats are used to travel along the shore or to gain access to the ice pack on the lake as it advances and recedes with the tides in the

spring. Snowmobiles are left on the ice pack for travel across the areas of the lake still bound with ice. Boats are then fastened to the snowmobile and towed across the ice as men continue to hunt for the spring game.

As the ice melts around the shoreline, so do the ice bridges that connect the sections of the winter road. The closing of the winter road means a return to isolation. Many last minute trips are made to Fort Norman and Norman Wells before the ice bridge on the Porcupine River breaks up and is pushed into the Great Bear River by the spring waters. Snowmobile traffic to and from other communities is safe for a short period of time after the GNWT closes the winter road. Snowmobile traffic is considerably lighter than the large, multi-axle trucks that haul goods to isolated communities. Ice roads are open only as long as they are safe for the large truck traffic; however, with closing, the roads are still relatively safe for the smaller snowmobiles for a slightly longer period. To pass across streams and creeks along the Great Bear River a traveller must skip his snowmobile across the remaining ice at an ice bridge point, a somewhat dangerous but usual occurrence in the North.

Summer (June to September)

- daylight (23 hours at peak)
- sunny days (highest annual temperature occurs)
- access to community by air and water only
- fishing and hunting (access by water)
- visiting popular
- Arena activities
    - off season maintenance
- Gymnasium activities
    - floor hockey
    - volleyball
    - basketball
- Hall activities
    - bingo
    - drum dances (formal or display)
    - family and community events
- Culture Centre
    - drumming
    - dancing
    - Hand Games
    - family and community events
- Other Activities
    - Land Claim Negotiations
        - nightly events went to early morning
        - visiting popular
    - Dene Games
    - Softball
    - Spiritual Week (opening of Prophet's House)
    - Kids Summer Program
    - Land Skills Program
    - Waterfront Program
    - Canada Day Softball Tournament
    - Bennet Field gathering
    - rummage sales

Figure 4. Summer schedule of events (June to September).

The snow is completely gone and preparations are begun for the summer's building and construction projects. Supplies for building are crated in the South, brought to the community on the winter road, and stored until spring[2]. When the temperature is above freezing and the snow is

off the ground, the crates will be organized and moved to the proper locations for opening. Once the ground has thawed the crates are opened and construction begins. For many Sahtudene, construction provides seasonal employment that is vital to their economic survival through the winter months, a period when employment opportunities are limited. As construction begins, activities in the community are modified, and a sense of urgency accompanies a drive to erect the shell of each building before the weather turns cold again. With new building construction, the frame and outer shell are completed before the cold weather and the inside will be finished during the fall and early winter.

Summer tends to centre around the water and travel upon it. Boats are important to go out "on the land" to fish, hunt, and live. In the community the extended hours of light give everyone extra time to participate in activities in and around the community. Most people spend the summer months out of doors picnicking, visiting friends, playing games (cards, softball etc.). Temperatures range from 20-30° C, ideal temperatures for being outside, often until 2:00 AM or later. The open water, the beautiful weather and the long summer days lend themselves well to the completion of several special events and to the scheduling of summer recreational activities.

Summer Gatherings

One of the most important events of the Western Arctic during the summer period is the Spiritual Gathering in Fort Franklin. Dene from as far south as Alberta and Saskatchewan come to attend the Gathering. In 1991 the opening and dedication of a new spiritual house to the Dene prophet Ayha, in Fort Franklin, was a reason for a celebration of Dene beliefs. The community of 600 swelled to over 1000 during the week of celebrations. Traditional Dene ceremonies as well as Roman Catholic ceremonies were held daily. During the evening drumming, dancing, feasting, and hand games were held, welcoming all visitors and friends to the community. People visited friends, neighbours, and new acquaintances well into the early morning.

A popular family oriented activity during the summer is the Bennett Field Gathering. Held half way between Fort Norman and Fort Franklin in an open area a few kilometres from the Great Bear River, it is an opportunity for friends to visit and be on the land. The duration is often several weeks although the official event is only three or four days in length. The Gathering is

sponsored by community substance abuse programs (Basic Awareness Program in Fort Franklin) and a sober environment is encouraged and discussed. This event supports the activities of the family and the individual by recognizing the traditional values of the Dene in contemporary life.

Many residents of Great Bear Lake also took the opportunity, provided by the Bennett Field Gathering, to take fish (dried and fresh) to other Sahtu communities. There the fish is traded, sold or given as gifts, often being seen as a form of reciprocity for past hospitality and friendship as well as an offering to promote future encounters.

During this period of warmth, the Sahtudene hold Summer Games that recreate and display traditional Sahtudene values in the form of games and activities. Each community may hold a traditional games event and also arrange for selected individuals to attend Regional Games. Each Games is a time for visiting with friends as well as participating in the actual events. The traditional games and activities of the Dene are often joined with contemporary Euro-Canadian games to become the focus for each gathering. Winning is not as important as having taken part. Winners are often only recognized momentarily and even then this recognition does not carry over to future events. If prizes are awarded, winners are encouraged to share where possible. All participants are cheered on and supported in their endeavour.

Should an event not be deemed "proper" by an attending group of participants, these participants will often arrange to hold a similar games, in their own community, without notice, to display the "proper" way of doing things. This display of pride is often mistaken for arrogance, but should actually be seen as an invitation to come to a community and experience the hospitality that its residents have to offer.

Land Skills Program

One of the most successful programs of the 1991 summer was the Land Skills Program. It was designed to meet the needs of the kids who were not able to get out onto the land because their parents worked, they were from single parent families, or their families did not have the resources to get onto the land. The Hamlet, Recreation Committee, Band, GNWT Renewable Resources and other community members supported and assisted in the program. Many kids

(boys and girls) were taken by boats for a three day excursion to an island (Clara's Island) where traditional skills for living on the land could be taught by respected members of the community. C.N., a respected member of the community with a strong family tradition of living on the land, was asked to assist with the development and running of the program. It took a lot of time and effort to teach the boys traditional activities. The girls initially were less involved in the fishing but were very involved in the preparation of food and both the boys and the girls were equally active in the traditional games and discussions held during the camp.

One of the prevalent culture traits of the Sahtudene is the role of women on the land. Many traditional legends and taboos exist with the Dene as to the proper place of women on the land. Women traditionally are the ones who attend to the camp and prepare the food as well as tending to the hunters needs. Within the Land Skills Program many of these taboos and norms became apparent. Traditional gender roles were obvious, supporting the domination by men in areas concerning the provision of food for the family or group. The role of the girls and their responsibilities reinforced their traditional roles as attendants to camp needs. The girls, even the leader, were left together to sew, bead, and discuss traditional roles of women on the land. These were the traditional skills that women took to the land. The boys were to fish, hunt, and discuss aspects of life on the land that helped them to become better men and to understand how to live on the land, as their ancestors did. As the Recreation Director it was my unenviable role to ensure that the program was offered to all the kids and that while concentrating on a traditional lifestyle the girls were not left out of some of the programming; this was difficult as the boys and one of the leaders were determined to enforce the gender roles.

For the first two days, while the boys were out fishing, the girls spent their time beading and sewing with one of the summer program leaders (also female). On the afternoon of the second day the female leader told me about the girls' disappointment at not being able to fish. I broached this subject with the two male leaders. It was explained to me that the place for women and girls was not fishing or hunting, but, given the circumstances of the program and the age of the girls, they would be allowed to go out with the boys in the afternoon. The disdain of the boys and one of the leaders was obvious, but I was not confronted with the subject again. The girls were permitted to go fishing with the boys.

While in the camp the kids were kept very busy. They were taught the proper technique for filleting the fish they had caught, how to prepare racks for drying some of the fish and played games throughout the island bushes. One of the games played and enjoyed was a pointing game. The person who was "it" was blindfolded then spun around, while the spinning was going on the others scattered throughout the brush around the individual. Once spun several times, the dizzy, blindfolded person was placed on the ground, on their knees. The idea was to sneak up to the blindfolded person and snatch a cloth that was looped on their belt, without being caught. To be caught, and eliminated from the round, the people sneaking up on the blindfolded player must avoid being "pointed at" by the blindfolded person. The person who was "it" must point directly at the approaching person to indicate that they have been heard; a general point to the region of the sneaking player was insufficient[4]. C.N. explained that this game was a form of preparation for hunting. One must learn to listen and have good "aim" in order to effectively hunt. The game was played for several hours in the morning on the island.

Summer Activities

Summer is a time for all things outdoors; softball, swimming, being on the land, and other recreational activities become the norm; for short periods of time. Mooseskin Ball occurred infrequently, softball play lasted for about one month and swimming lasted during a special program (one week) until the community realized that the kids being in the water was unsafe without supervision (as the majority of the adults in the community could not swim supervision was highly unlikely).

Mooseskin Ball is one of the summertime, traditional games of the Sahtudene. It is played with two loosely formed teams and a ball that has been fashioned out of a piece of moose or caribou skin sewn and filled with moss and other plant materials. The object of the game is similar to "keep away". The teams are usually divided by gender, although any age can participate. The duration of the game was as long as players wanted to play. The game seemed to begin, and to end, without definable limitations. Just a ball and some people and suddenly the game had begun.

The occasion on which the Mooseskin game occurred that I witnessed was Canada Day. The scheduled Canada Day celebrations had wrapped up for the day and people were heading for home. Several youths were on their way across a field when the ball was suddenly thrown into their midst; the game then began. The game lasted several hours and involved people of all ages. People joined in or watched as they saw fit. A truly unique game for the region. One that has traditional significance for the Sahtudene and is very entertaining to watch.

Softball, during the summer of 1991, began in a similar way to the Mooseskin Ball; it started as a pick-up event and the seemed to gain momentum until finally ending when attention fell onto another activity. In the evening the adults, men and women, would gather and play for about 3 hours in the centre of the community. The Hamlet shop had constructed and erected a backstop in the corner of an open area in the middle of the community. There, players are chosen and added until all the positions are filled and a game is played. The women usually are allowed to bat, but did not often play outfield. If they were allowed to play in the field they usually played shortstop, pitcher, second or third base. The organization of a co-ed fun league was the beginning of the end to the season. The league, requested and enthusiastically organized, ran for about two weeks. Then, players started to disappear and no replacements arrived. Teams combined, people went on the land or were away on holidays and did not return to play; the league ended. The kids enthusiastically played in the open positions as a few members of teams failed to show, but the number of kids soon became more than the adults and the remaining adults did not want to play with the kids. One month of fun and the community moved on to something new, the more formal structure involved with a scheduled league may have directly led to the end of the softball season.

The swimming program ran concurrently with the adult softball league, however it also was short lived and allowed the kids to join in the softball games as the adults dropped out. The swimming program was arranged with the help of the GNWT and their Waterfront Program and was initially supported by the community at large. The Waterfront Program was designed to assist small communities in bringing in qualified individuals to teach water safety skills to kids. This one or two week (depending on the community's needs) program's only requirements were a safe place to swim and a group of energetic kids. We had both in Fort Franklin. Two locations on Little Lake, to the west of the community, were chosen and for a week the kids played and

learned in the water. After the departure of the instructor, two summer program assistants continued to take the kids to play in the water. After about a week of this more informal play, the Hamlet Council informed me that they, and the community in general, considered this activity to be too risky for the kids without proper supervision. This ended the water fun until next year, when the program could be run again.

Although many of the activities that I have focussed on occurred outdoors, the summer is not always warm and dry and conducive to these events. When the rain comes events are forced indoors and the gymnasium becomes the popular meeting place for the whole community. Kids are allowed into the gymnasium in the evenings, unless the adults are participating in some activity, and they are able to choose the type of game they wish to play; soccer, floor hockey, basketball or anything else they have equipment for. Supervisors often tried to influence the decision on which game would be played, as they often wished to participate. However, this situation unfortunately led to the young men of the community entering the gymnasium and bullying a spot in the game. The kids were the losers, they could not resist for fear of physical harm (if not at that moment, then at some later time), and firmer supervision by older members of the community was necessary in order to allow the kids to continue playing.

As the weather starts to cool and the days begin to shorten the insects of the North emerge. Mosquitoes, "Bull-Dogs" (horse flies), black flies and other biting insects enjoy the cooler air and the animals, including people, that live in the sub-Arctic forests. The shores of the lakes and the rivers are the least infested as the breeze from the water generally keeps the bugs away. Animals seeking refuge from the biting insects move towards the shore, but only achieve limited relief from stings and bites. It is this time of the year that the Sahtudene have most success hunting from the rivers and lakes. Shore provides limited or no cover for the animals trying to escape the insects that are thick in the bush. Obviously this provides the hunters with a greater opportunity for a successful hunt as their prey is not under cover in the bush. The insects, the hunting, and the changing weather all indicate the coming of fall to the region.

Fall (September to November)

- days start to get shorter
- weather starts to cool
- insect population increases
- events start to move indoors
- school begins (kids and adult education)
- Arena activities
    - preparation for coming cold
- Gymnasium activities
    - badminton
    - floor hockey
    - volleyball
    - basketball
    - Brownies
- Hall activities
    - bingo
    - drum dances (formal or display)
    - teen (modern) dances
    - family and community events
    - Territorial court
- Culture Centre
    - drumming
    - dancing
    - Hand Games
    - teen (modern) dances
    - family and community events
- Other Activities

Figure 5. Fall schedule of events (September to November).

In September children return to school and meet many of the new teachers. New people entering the small community bring life and community spirit to the Fall. Meeting and learning by both the new and the old creates a reason for visiting. Many teens and young adults, who have educational needs beyond what is available in the community school, leave Fort Franklin to attend school in Yellowknife or Inuvik.

As the weather cools indoor activities start to become more numerous and the gymnasium fills with people every evening. Some want to play basketball, others volleyball, yet others still want

to play floor hockey. Each group has a particular interest and a particular composition of age and gender. It is the men, primarily, who select the activities in the gymnasium each night . Only when the adult men are absent do women, youths and kids get a say in activity selection.

One of the most popular indoor sports in Fort Franklin, for all ages and both genders, is volleyball. The Recreation Director, prior to myself, trained a group of young girls to play; a group that became quite good and travelled the Sahtu region as well as attending the Regional Trials in Inuvik. These girls, now teenagers, enjoyed playing and their play gave the women of the community the opportunity to participate in a sport without the men's involvement.

During the 1991-92 year the wave-like cycle of participation and anticipation by the women and youth girls was obvious. As noted earlier with broom ball in the arena, one of the first attempts at a Women's Night in the gym was met with initial high levels of participation and attendance. Volleyball was the choice of sports, but the option was present for whatever the women wished to play.

Volleyball generated the most interest but by the fourth week the youth men made up half the players; spots that were created by the decline in women's attendance. During those initial four weeks the men and the youth men had hassled and badgered and taunted many of the women. The men had tried to play, referee, coach, and otherwise undermine the women's time. It may not have been intentional, for the youth men it was more of a show of interest in being with the youth females. Any event that would showcase their superior skills, in front of the women, was a reason for the young men to attend.

Although volleyball in Fort Franklin became a sporadic event the game was still the standard game for women in the Sahtu. Each Hockey tournament was held in conjunction with a women's volleyball tournament. If there were not enough women attending from other communities to play standard southern tournament style games, the local women would rally round and make up two or more teams of their own, as well as combining visitors and locals together, just to be able to play. The attention and cheering may have been focussed entirely on the men, but the women always had fun, despite their apparent secondary status in the gathering.

For some of the older women players the chance for a trip to Norman Wells was more important than playing in a tournament. I remember my first trip to Norman Wells for a Volleyball tournament (ladies) and hockey gathering (kids). Several of the women who had come for the volleyball tournament had to rush to the hair salon beside the "Big Bar" before it closed to get their hair permed. I went for the ride to see what the excitement was about. The chance to get made up differently and to be pampered was important to these women (and a nice treat as nothing like that was available in Fort Franklin). They wanted to look and feel good for their night out on the town. The older members of the team even took the youngest girls to the salon for the experience and camaraderie that a night out with just the women could be about. They played volleyball Saturday and Sunday, but the salon visit was a big part of the tournament trip.

On the occasions that volleyball was part of a tournament in the Sahtu region the women did not have a set team roster. Show up and play was normal for gathering a team. In Norman Wells, on one occasion, there were several substitutes for the Saturday games, but Sunday there were too few to place a team on the floor. This is when the youth women got their time. The older ones had been out late on the Saturday night and had not arrived to play on Sunday. This left spots open for the youth women who had not been out as late the previous night. This worked out perfectly as all the women that had attended the tournament were able to play.

Floor hockey is the male equivalent to women's volleyball. It begins when the ice starts to form on the lake and lasts until the men can get into the arena and play. After the men depart the gymnasium, the kids grab the sticks and play until they are exhausted, or are kicked out as the supervisors wish to go home. Usually the kids' pick-up games are in the evening, while the men are in the arena. The kids (male) play until 9:00 PM, often bargaining for more time with the supervisor, until 10:00 PM. As the men establish a routine of play in the arena in the evenings, the kids also begin to establish their time on the ice, usually beginning immediately after school (4:00 - 6:00 PM, three times a week). It is this early time in the fall that the women and the youth have the most opportunity to use the gym, although that changes as they to wish to use the arena.

Cycles

It is not just the women who appear to have a cyclic attitude to sport and recreation participation. The men also behave in cycles. The basketball season in the gym lasts a few weeks, usually towards the middle of the hockey season. The men get tired of playing on the same teams and wish to do something a bit different. Drop-in basketball usually peaks and crests within only three weeks; during the peak period it is played three times a week. Softball, swimming, broomball, volleyball and basketball all followed the same general trend towards intense but sporadic participation. This made scheduling a headache for me as I was used to the southern 'set in stone' schedules of play. Once I understood the dynamics involved, however, I viewed it as a welcome challenge to keep the community active in its recreation lifestyle.

This chapter was designed specifically with the intention of providing a body of information that the following chapters can expand upon. Through the use of narrative description , I have attempted to give the reader a feel for the yearly activities that I experienced in Fort Franklin. It was hoped that this format would provide the reader with the whole picture within which the recreational case studies and the recreation program analysis, which follows, may be better understood.

Analysis

Before contact with early explorers and traders the Sahtudene were environmentally driven. Ecological conditions determined the availability of food, shelter and clothing, as well as defining recreation. With the incursion of southern Euro-Canadian culture their existence was modified forever.

After many years of change and forced community settlement, it was thought that localized management of resources and a wage based economy would bring prosperity and stability for residents of Fort Franklin. This was a radical change from the environmental focus of previous generations. Recreation also changed, and the eventual arrival of recreational professionals, who reinforced government development and infrastructure programs, further redefined Sahtudene culture.

These changes began to occur well before the author's arrival in 1991. By the time that the author arrived, the community was already adapting and changing their lifestyle and cultural orientation to reflect the changes from the South. One consideration was that traditional values seem to have been modified as the Sahtudene were attempting to revise their traditional culture (values, games, etc.) to fit their contemporary lifestyle. They did not appear to want to return to the old way, but rather to update it to a new one. On the other hand, new lifestyle activities were being modified to fit with traditional values and norms.

Cycle of Events and Analytical Interpretation

The annual cycle recorded served to illuminate the events that filled the seasons from a recreation professional's point of view. It was an image of contemporary Sahtudene culture that highlighted change as manifested in recreational activity.

A dominant theme emerging from the data focusses on the underlying structure of recreation. Decisions involving forms of recreation, event durations, and administration were made within the structure of a traditional Sahtudene model. Overlaying this structure was a template of the Southern recreation administration, with formalized committees, meetings, minutes, and positions. The overall structure made use of both traditional Sahtudene values in their contemporary form with southern administrative structures, to meet the needs of community recreation.

Dene Time versus Southern Time

Southern Canada is oriented to clock time. The organization of daily activity is dictated, to a great extent, by specific schedules of time. The Sahtudene are oriented towards a more natural, ecological focus with the orientation being not on time, but on the environment around them. The pervasive role of time as a Euro-Canadian construct negatively influences the flow of daily recreation in Fort Franklin. Residents wish to pursue opportunities based on a schedule that does not define windows for participation, but rather a fluid constant of event availability.

Organized events in and around the community would initially have schedules and team rosters, but the result would be a decreased in their inherent organizational value, after the initial period of excitement. League formation could be complex or simple, but was never permanent. Agreed upon rules, time periods, statistics recording, and schedules did not guarantee that a season would be completed, or even started.

League play, in general, presents the image of a sustained effort by many teams and their members to determine a champion of some form. In Fort Franklin, however, the start and stop nature of interest and participation often made formal league formation an exercise in futility. Softball, volleyball, basketball, and floor hockey were suggested as league play activities at some point in the year. Initial responses were always high and teams (often mixed) were formed.

Play often began according to set rules, teams, and schedules. Play typically stopped after two weeks, less than half way through a schedule, with team members scrambled throughout the rosters of other teams. Rules of league play were usually changed by this point to make it a "pick up" type of game. In the case of softball the scheduled season never started, too many people had left the community to be on the land. However, pick-up games of softball (not unlike Mooseskin handball) occurred sporadically and were usually initiated by the youth.

In Section 5.3 of the Hamlet's Recreation Committee Meeting minutes (Minutes #09/91: 5) the suggestion is made that a half season format for league play be investigated to promote enthusiasm and participation. In section 4.4 (Minutes #09/91: 5) it is reported that softball play never got beyond occasional play but that house leagues (a small team league) should be encouraged for the summer of 1992. These situations highlight the stop and start nature of sport participation, but encourage the need for programming that provides the opportunity for future, healthy activity.

Past and Present Structure Adaptations

Fort Franklin, it was commented on by several residents, once ran a floor hockey league complete with equipment, officials, statistics, schedules and playoffs. This level of organization and commitment was not evident during this researchers time in the community, nor was it

suggested that it would occur again. The closest Fort Franklin ever came to this commitment was with the formation of a men's ice hockey league. Unfortunately, this too eventually fell by the wayside.

In 1991, Fort Franklin created of a formal men's ice hockey association. It had to conform to the guidelines of the Northwest Territories Hockey Association (a member of the Canadian Hockey Association) and would affiliate with associations across Canada as well as within the Northwest Territories. This seemingly simple process became a difficult exercise in basic league administration. Even after the election of association officers, the bulk of league setup and administration was performed by the recreation director. The league depended on an external administrator, and not internal membership, to continue operation from week to week. This defeated the concept of autonomy and community development, creating a reliance on southern expertise in a situation where it was not required.

There was no carry over of structure or administration that one might expect given the community's experience with league operations. Even situations where participation and enthusiasm for a sport was high, such as the hockey example seen above, one could not assume the formation of league play. Two weeks of floor hockey, every night for three hours, one would think would logically lead to a suggestion of league formation or round robin play: it did not.

Southern structures of participation for recreation and sport have had several opportunities to become entrenched in the contemporary culture of Fort Franklin. Several attempts were made to do this. Traditional community structures, however, prevented the complete assimilation of the community. Instead it permitted some inference toward schedules and cycles of events, but the traditional egalitarian, adaptational lifestyle of the Sahtudene prevented complete domination by southern administrative structures. Ecological life focus, flexibility, adaptation, and many other traditional Sahtudene traits contributed to a contemporary culture that could adapt and syncretize with southern cultural elements.

The Traditional Structure Within the Structure

Traditional values also influenced the types, duration and occurrences of recreational events. The structure of the event was greatly different in Fort Franklin than in southern communities. The events themselves may have had southern roots, or were based upon a southern image, but they had an underlying substructure of decision making firmly grounded within traditional Sahtudene values; the Dene Way.

The GNWT oversaw the development, construction, and activation of capital intensive programs to place recreation facilities in small communities across the Territories. These facilities, and the considerable cost associated with them, were intended to support community social and recreational development. Unintentionally, these programs also served to reinforce a Southern model of sport and recreation development. Despite the direct and indirect processes of assimilation to the dominant Southern Euro-Canadian culture, the structure of the community revealed something quite different than complete assimilation. It revealed a Sahtudene system of recreation and sport administration that was a foundation for delivery of recreation in the community.

On the surface, the model of recreation administration in Fort Franklin presented an image of a Southern structure of committees and actions based on community discussion at committee meetings. Directives would be given to the Recreation Director that addressed the needs of community members. In reality, the structure did not have such syncretisms. The Recreation Director was often given charge to plan, implement and direct the delivery of recreation with only a Southern model in mind. Direct feedback from the community was rare, as the new Recreation Director was often unfamiliar with the traditional communication model. This was the initial case for this researcher in Fort Franklin. Trial and error were prevalent until this researcher was able to adapt to the successful mix of southern and traditional ways and structures that Fort Franklin had developed.

In order to receive operational funding, infrastructure grants and other funding from the GNWT, necessary to the ongoing recreational pursuits, municipal governments were required to have certain administrative structures in place. Accountability, an ongoing problem for small

communities across the north (Paraschak, 1983; Adams, 1978), was required to ensure continued community funding from the GNWT In order for capital development plans to be met, recreation had to be supported, thus a defined structure had to be present at the municipal level. This involved specified municipal bylaws (creation of a Standing Committee for Recreation as part of the municipal structure), dedication to personnel training, hiring of recreational professionals for program administration, and municipal sponsorship of people and programs to ensure the future of community recreation services. Compliance with these and other conditions was a significant community expense, but there was no alternative. The conditions had to be met, or the community would risk losing GNWT funding for community development (GNWT MACA, 1994).

The rigid structure, promoted ardently by the GNWT, was a Southern model for recreation delivery. The personnel that reinforced that structure were, until lately, trained in the south and as such continued to reinforce the structure from their background. This structure was unable, in several instances, to adapt to community sensitive programs that would have intrinsically promoted Northern culture.

With increasing pressure to participate in the growth of a wage economy, residents of Fort Franklin were continually in search of an income. Many committees and advisory boards in the community paid honorariums to people for their participation. Committee and board members were paid fifty to one hundred and fifty dollars per meeting for their presence[6]. It was a welcome extra (without tax deductions) to residents fortunate enough to get elected or appointed on such committees. Money was a motivator for participation, more so, it would appear, than in the south where volunteering often means "without pay".

The recreation committee members were not paid an honorarium. This was extremely unusual as all other Hamlet organizations, Standing Committees, and the elected councillors were paid. The reasoning behind this absence of monetary incentive was never explained and did present a definite disadvantage to the recreation director. The Recreation Committee had no interest in attempting to revamp the Southern model of play nor did they show much interest in volunteering their time to help with events. Perhaps if the members had been paid a small amount for their services they would have taken a more active role in the determination of community recreation

needs. If, corresponding to this motivational change, recreation had been recognized as an important aspect of cultural revitalization, it would have contributed to the development of programs sensitive to the contemporary cultural identity of Sahtu residents. Unfortunately, this was not the situation.

The structure for the delivery of recreation in Fort Franklin did not encourage members to take an active part in the revitalization of their culture through traditional forms of recreation. It opted, rather, to let an existing structure provide for the community's needs. During the cycle of events that the author was privy to, the Recreation Committee discussed the importance of payment for their services several times. Each time, they suggested that increased commitment and involvement would result from a nominal stipend, however, this was never made as a formal request to the Hamlet Council, and thus the Hamlet Council never approved of paying the Recreation Committee any honorarium.

Underlying Structure of Sahtu Recreation

The domination of southern recreation in Fort Franklin presented many non-Sahtudene cultural definitions for participation. These southern influences included intensity variations in participation, a comparison and ongoing ranking of performance results, an attempt at structured competition, and formally defined rules and regulations which were enforced even during informal events. Each influence contributed to the cultural domination of community recreation in Fort Franklin.

The Sahtudene informally rejected much of the southern structure and the above mentioned influences of recreation delivery, choosing instead to participate in the process with an understanding of basic rules, but modifying their involvement to fit certain conditions. Concepts of personal time (discussed in Chapter 7) and communication were noticeably different, but critical to the understanding of Sahtudene revitalization. Discussions and decisions were often passed through the community, like a poll, with results emerging through indirect channels. This process became very important to recreation in the community. The network of communication in Fort Franklin was an important part of keeping the community together and promoting cultural

solidarity. Informal communication, a key part of community cohesion, was an important contributor to making decisions that effected the community.

The Sahtudene have long respected each and every member of their community as an autonomous individual, but also as a member of the group. If there was a decision concerning the community that needed to be made, the situation and its ramifications for the Sahtudene were discussed informally, respecting the rights of everyone to be heard. If and when a consensus was achieved, the results were discussed. Any and all individuals or groups were made aware of the community's impression of the matter. Within the discussion, families, groups, friends and individuals could form polarized positions, but the discussion continued. These positional groups might have influenced the final decision, but not without minimal consultation. If the decision was considered wrong, or not consensual, discussion was continued or the 'wronged' group or person given an opportunity to retire the matter without consequences. The Sahtudene were free to voice an opinion against any decision, but not to directly attack dissenters. This method of network communication reflected the traditional belief in the importance of each and every adult's opinion and the complete discussion of events before making a decision.

Although the underlying structure for recreation in the community was more traditional in nature (ie. networking, group discussions and informal decision making), there were situations when decisions required the use of the Southern structure. To impose sanctions on community residents was to directly confront, an action that violated the traditional autonomous recognition of each individual. The Southern model for recreation administration with its committees and meeting minutes, was often used to enforce any decisions, thus allowing individuals to avoid direct confrontations.

This contemporary strategy recognized the value of traditional cultural norms while adapting them to reinforce sanctions in present day. An example of this is the decision of the Recreation Committee to ban a person from the arena and hall facility for being involved in a violation of facility rules. The guilty individual was informed of the sanction by the Chairman of the Committee, although the action was brought to the attention of the Recreation Committee by staff of the arena and hall complex. Every member of the community discussed the event and decision to some extent, but the sanction came from the Committee and was enforced by

individuals empowered by the Committee. The value placed on the egalitarian and autonomous nature of the person was never challenged, the structure enforced the conditions without violating traditional community norms and beliefs.

Facility: Venues for Choice

Recreation facilities provide venues for year round activity. This minimized the extent to which the environment could influence participation in recreational activities. Although facilities provided access to a tempered and controlled environment it also promoted certain activities conducive to the space. The Recreation Director also promoted certain activities within the space, typically southern in nature. A choice was evident, but the types of choice were determined by residents. They took advantage of the choices and of conditions to create unique patterns of participation and scheduling, underwritten with traditional culture.

In 1991-92 traditional values were becoming evident at the organizational level for many events. Schedules, once firm, became choices. Seasons, once defined as pre-season, team picking, scheduled regular league play, and championships, became a series of games. The series had a drop-in nature with team members being picked from the people present. Sum zero strategies were replaced with non-sum zero strategies (Glassford, 1970) individual performance was recognized but not beyond the duration of the game, and no single participant was considered the best. Every person who played had a "best" that was temporary and attached to a certain contribution to the game.

Traditional culture and the environment played an important role in the continuance and development of recreation, as well as in the choice of venues. Summer meant that people could head out onto the land; the warmer the weather, the more people left. The population in Fort Franklin could decrease to less than four hundred people. Many events became pick-up in nature as the number of people dwindled so low that it was impossible and impractical to form a league or create a schedule. The facilities became more available providing a greater diversity in the choice of activity and in who was able to use that facility as the men were generally out on the land.

Winter permitted some travel and that brought people into Fort Franklin to visit. Rather than heading out onto the land, as they would in the summer, they would stay in the community for a week, a month or in some cases, the entire winter. Given the situation, anyone present in the community was allowed to fit into a team for any period without violating a roster or rule. All the recreational facilities were booked and more conflict occurred during this season. Some people signed up but never actually played; they wanted to be part of the community while they were there and this was how they accomplished that goal.

The colder the weather, the more activity that occurred indoors. During the weeks it took for Great Bear Lake to completely freeze over, men played floor hockey, basketball, and then floor hockey again. This was the cycle for September, October and some of November, 1991. By late November, 1991 they were playing ice hockey in the arena on the newly finished natural ice surface.

At the start of the hockey year (November, 1991) an initial round robin schedule was created. It was a way to allow the men time to get use to the ice and remember how to skate, fall, and shoot. During play a unique method of schedule application occurred. Games would be interchanged, based on the team members available for a given night of play. If one team was not available and another was, another game would be played and the results entered onto the round robin chart. If there were insufficient members for any two teams to play, the men actually present would form teams and play. Their modified teams would represent two teams that were on the chart and results would be entered. No one argued, no forfeits occurred, no rescheduling, just playing.

Long schedules of play, and facility schedules themselves, were impossible to enforce and were unnecessary within the dynamic culture of Fort Franklin. Short bursts of activity were best. Change kept interest high and so people were constantly given choices. Not everyone was able to participate, but everyone had the option. Cycles of recreation did reflect cycles of weather, ecology, and life.

Synthesis

The domination or influence of gender, age or politically defined groups over others was part of the culture of the Sahtudene in Fort Franklin. Its influence in the recreation sphere of the community was part of the community and the culture. It is a reflection of their history and of change. A change that has been made through contact with outsiders and a change to a new and different way of life. Their culture is making changes in their community recreation. It is seen in the examples of scheduling for facilities and creation of recreation programs that attempt to meet the need of the whole community, not just a part.

The fluctuations of participation reflect the hierarchy of control and gender relations within the community. While it is changing, men are still at the top and everyone else falls below. Sahtudene culture is present in non-traditional recreational pursuits, albeit here in the form of scheduling.

During the year and a half that the researcher was present in the community the evidence of change was ever present. The bombardment of the community with images of southern Euro-Canadian culture was mixed with a worldly view of global culture, and a contemporary need to revise and revitalize Sahtudene culture. For the Sahtudene, their unique and important identity had to be preserved, before the elders took it away forever. Recreation, games and play were one focus for the revival of traditional beliefs and a forum in which to develop a contemporary culture.

Chapter Notes

1. This slow rate of travel is further aggravated by swarms of biting mosquitoes, blackflies and other insects, making movement tedious and exhausting. Travel along the waterways during the summer is desirable as movement is easier (although limited in direction by the path of the waterway) and game is more readily found along the shoreline as it also tries to avoid the plague of insects found in the bush.

2. Once the crates are stored in the appropriate locations (near the construction site) the kids soon move in and play in, around and between the crates. The crates become an amazing forest for play and games throughout the winter months.

3.Although the request was to fish, several other issues and tasks were also discussed between the female leader and myself. The girls were not able to leave the island as the boys had taken the boats. Nor were they able to cut fire wood on the shores like the boys had. The fishing appeared to be the easiest and least volatile of the complaints to accommodate.

4. C.N. determined the exact nature of the pointing, and reinforced the elimination of the player or the lack of a direct pointing by the blindfolded person.

5. Actual participation was required for someone to say that they could play a given sport, which often meant that if you could show up you could play. It did not matter that an individual was only going to play in one game of a team's scheduled fifteen, or that the member would eventually substitute to another team to play the one game. The important thing was that the person played.

6. There were many hard working individuals in Fort Franklin, many who gave generously to benefit whatever cause or job that needed assistance. They often did so without seeking any compensation. The reality of high unemployment, a growing population, and static economic growth, however, is that every dollar counts, no matter what is done, or not done, to earn it.

CHAPTER 5

CASE STUDY: CULTURE CENTRE AND ARENA/HALL COMPLEX

Introduction

Fort Franklin is a community that is devolving from a dependant status to one of self-directed control. During this transition, the facilities that exist and the communities preference for each given certain situations contributes to the development of Fort Franklin as a centre for cultural boundary definition. Traditional activities are allocated to the Culture Centre indicative of the important status of such events, while contemporary sport and recreation are allocated to the modern Arena and Hall complex. The dynamic tension that exists between the Hamlet and Band Councils is indicative of the split leadership within the community and the continuum of complementary and conflicting boundaries that exist within the community structure.

The chapter takes the form of a case study in order to allow the author full descriptive insight into each venue and the choice that always had to be made between the two facilities.

A description of the Culture Centre, the structure itself and the interior of the site, is followed by a view into the impressions and activities that seem only to exist and be generated by this traditional venue and a narrative view of a typical evening at the Culture Centre (as experienced by the author).

A comparison of the two facilities follows that will allow a better understanding of the difficulty in making a decision on which venue to use. Often the decision was made several times before the scheduled event took place. The Culture Centre tended to be used for impromptu gatherings, however, while the Arena and Hall Complex relied more on formal booking procedures.

The final section of this chapter contains a description of the Arena and Hall Complex; the facility itself, the organization involved in getting the venue organized and operating according to the community's wishes and the events that were held at this site.

The Facilities

The Culture Centre

The Fort Franklin Dene Culture Centre was a house of about 900 square feet that was converted into a small gathering centre in 1991 for community use. Located on the main road that winds through Fort Franklin, it is directly across from the Northern Store and the RCMP Station. The centre's prime location makes it the ideal gathering spot for impromptu evening activities. Most everyone has to pass by the Centre's front door to go anywhere in Fort Franklin. The Culture Centre is one of three buildings located on the north side of the main road. These three houses are amongst the oldest dwellings in town and the community felt that the conversion of one of these houses was an excellent way to extend the life of the structure. Now, the house, as the Dene Culture Centre, receives constant care and attention as it is the most regularly used facility in town.

The Dene Culture Centre is a main room with a small kitchen area at the rear. The central feature of the main room is the large black, wood-burning stove that is on the right of the room as you enter from the street. In the back, northeast corner there is a framed opening in the wall to the left of the door that leads to the kitchen. Under the opening is a small shelf only large enough to hold the sugar and creamer for coffee and tea. The walls are plywood, once painted white, with several coat hooks in the northwest corner on which the drummers place coats, hats, and other personal items. Smoke from the stove and cigarettes have combined with other airborne materials to form colour gradations on the walls, a transition from white at the bottom to beige/tan near the ceiling. The floors are plywood and show the stains from mud, water and other materials that have, over time, been tracked across them. The ceiling, once white but now, like the walls, beige/tan, has fixtures for two light bulbs in the main room and one in the kitchen area. The bulbs in the fixtures are usually of low wattage which lends to the atmosphere of closeness. Above the stove is a dark, almost black, area where the chimney pipe and the heat from the stove have discoloured the ceiling. Around the walls are built-in benches that allow the room to be ringed with people.

At the back of the Centre is the small kitchen area that contains an old electric stove used for food warming, and drum tuning when the wood stove is not lit or not hot enough. One wall has several small counters and a cupboard that holds supplies for coffee and tea. The rear entrance to the Centre is located in the kitchen and people can come and go through it with food and other necessities of the gathering. If the front door is crowded and the Centre is hot, people periodically escape from the heat through the back door and gather in the field directly behind the Centre. The actual gaming and dancing is held inside but the visiting and the more serious discussions are held both inside and outside.

The Arena/Hall Complex

The arena and hall complex is a multimillion dollar capital venture built as part of the GNWT's recreation infrastructure program. From a central lobby area doors lead to the metal shell that housed the full size, natural ice arena. The change rooms for the arena were accessed from the shell as well as through the washrooms adjacent to the lobby. A small concession/kitchen was also accessible from the lobby as were the main doors to the hall. The hall was designed to sit 250 people, but would hold many more if the event warranted. The complex had all the modern amenities of similar structures found in the south, and complied to the 1991 NWT building codes in all respects.

The complex was brand new and the community, and especially the Recreation Committee, wanted to keep it up to code and maintain its clean, new atmosphere. One of the first duties upon my arrival was the determination of a fee schedule, user agreement, and some basic rules regarding the use of the arena and hall.

The Culture Centre versus the Hall

Although the Culture Centre's atmosphere is undoubtedly more conducive to a relaxed, friendly, close gathering there are times that the Hall must be used. Visiting dignitaries, official events such as the land claim discussions, court proceedings, bingos, or very large feasts and dances, that would never fit into the Culture Centre, must be held in the newly built arena/hall complex.

The decision between which venue to use was easiest when it involved the capacity of the venue and not the political alliances of the organizers. However, that was not often the case and I would book the Hall for certain events only to have the Band Manger or Chief call and ask to use the Hall's chairs and tables for the same event, only now the event was to be held in the Culture Centre. The political alliances that determined the venue to be used were commonplace and not meant as an affront to myself nor the facility. I could understand the choice of the Culture Centre, over the Hall, but I still had to make sure that the Hall was operated in a financially responsible manner. My personal feelings had to be put on hold sometimes in order to push the use of the Hall.

The community obviously preferred to use the Culture Centre. They seemed to like the smaller venue and personal atmosphere of the Centre over the Hall. I asked several people why the Hall was not a choice for impromptu gatherings and social events to the extent that the Centre was. It was explained to me that in the Centre the floor, and indeed the whole building, moved and swayed with the sound of the drums and the stepping of the dancers. That feeling of harmony and togetherness did not occur in the more modern hall complex. The smell of the wood burning in the stove, the sound of the drums coming into tune over the wood fire and the closeness of participants were understandably important parts of any gathering. In the larger Hall the atmosphere was not quite right. The Hall had a purpose when large numbers of people needed to be together at one time and in one place; however, for smaller groups and occasions, such as social gatherings in the evening, the Hall distorted the sound of the drums and the voices of the singers, making it seem less hospitable. While not competing with the Culture Centre, my job was to make the Hall as hospitable as possible in order to continue booking the larger activities (bingos, feasts, etc.) into our facility. Deals on rent, concession sales, and providing volunteers for every event went a long way towards the promotion of the Hall.

A Gathering in the Culture Centre

Although I was interested specifically in the promotion of the Hall, as soon as I entered the Culture Centre I could appreciate why it was preferred by residents.

The Culture Centre had an inherent electric atmosphere that was almost addictive. Once having been there you wanted to return. When you entered the door of the Centre, you took a deep breath and held it. The heat and smoke hit you like a wall. The stove had been stoked and the people had smoked and the room was pulsating. You had to make your way through all the people who needed to cool down and were standing in the front doorway and through all of the kids who were running in and out of the entrance way before you reached the location of the event itself. The smoke was always present and very thick. Although I did not smoke, I sometimes feel that I inhaled the equivalent of half a pack by attending a function or meeting at the Centre.

Once inside the door, you made your way through the packed room to find a seat or a place to stand or, if you were really brave, you could try to get through to the kitchen and the coffee. There you had a chance to say hello to all the people around the kitchen area while waiting for your cup. Usually a dollar, sometimes fifty cents; it was my reason for being there. You needed to "do" something once in the Centre. If you did not speak Slavey, did not smoke or drink coffee (or tea) and could not play the Hand Game, why were you there? I constantly had a coffee, Michelle had a coffee and a smoke. We both loved to visit with the people we knew and take the opportunity to meet their friends and families. Events outside the North, in Yellowknife, Norman Wells, or Fort Norman were gossiped about and events within the community that either Michelle or I had taken part in were rehashed and discussed with an eye to what could have been done better. Usually criticism came in the guise of what someone else had said or what someone's relative had done. Ideas for future events were presented and then expanded and often ballooned into national events that would take thousands of dollars and hundreds of people to pull off, though some of the original ideas we did use for recreation events.

Access for the Community Gatherings

Men always held the key to the door of the Centre. Whoever had the key last would be approached to open the door for an evening of social activity. If the holder did not agree, then the key would be passed to a senior Band official, a Councillor or the Chief to make a decision about opening the door. Men held and passed the key as well as determining the state of the Centre (open or closed).

Once the key was obtained, the gathering slowly began with the door being opened and with someone bringing wood and stoking the fire that had been lit earlier to warm the house. Then the drummers trickled in to start tuning their drums. Coffee was started in the kitchen, and a large pot of water was placed on the stove to boil for tea.

Men are in charge of the kitchen, starting the coffee, the tea, but the women bring any food that is required. The men controlled the key, and thus decided when, what, and who would use the Culture Centre, although the whole community would eventually turn up at some point during an event.

Groups of kids were always around the building getting into trouble, they were always welcome if they sat and watched or mimicked the activities, but if they were making a nuisance of themselves the men told them to leave. The kids would often go away to the Youth Drop-In Centre until they were kicked out of there, at which time they would return to the Culture Centre.

The women watched, smoked, and cheered the players or listened to the drumming. Some, who had small children, used the group to babysit and get a time to relax and be out of the house in the evening. They sat and talked, exchanging news and gossip with friends. If their children got out of control, they would take them home or find one of the female youth to look after the child (or children) until a bit later. Youth aged girls often like to attend to the tots, taking them about the Centre or to visit the Drop-In Centre where the youth and kids (ages 10 to 18) could play pool, watch movies, play Nintendo or just hang out.

A Beginning

Once most of the drummers were present, and the tuning of the drums was almost complete, one drummer would step forward and "officially" start the gathering (also refer to Asch, 1988).

The oldest son[1] of a prominent community elder[2], C.N. was usually present early in the evening and as such was usually the first to start drumming. He sat in the northwest corner of the room drumming, tuning and singing quietly. With drumming the skins lose their tightness and need to be periodically returned to the heat throughout the evening. The skin for a drum is usually

prepared from a caribou hide that has been tanned to a thinness that is almost translucent. Once it is pulled taut over a circular spruce or willow frame, the skin is held in place by a babaiche thong wrapped around the skin and frame. A crisscross pattern is formed by babaiche thongs on the bottom of the drum frame. This pattern of thongs provides support for the drum and a place to hold the drum while it is being played. If you hold a drum by the frame the sound becomes muted and dull. If you hold the supporting babaiche under the drum, the sound is crisp and sharp when in tune. To tune a drum you heat the skin. As the skin dries it shrinks over the frame and the tone goes up in pitch and the drum has a crisper sound. Held firmly but lightly in one hand, caribou ribs are used as drum sticks. The pattern of striking the drum involves the movement of the arm and wrist to achieve a slight bounce with each beat. The tempo and volume of the sounds are based on the drummer and the music.

The youngest drummers are the most anxious to join C.N. and play. Later they are replaced by young adult males. As the evening progresses both young and older men take turns drumming, Hand Gaming and visiting with others present. As people finish dinner in their homes, they head towards the Centre. Not everyone will attend on a given evening. Some people attend on a regular basis; others, often elders, come to have tea and visit but do not take part in any activity other than socializing. Men come to smoke and Hand Game. If the game is full or no changes are possible, they may leave and come back later in the evening. If they stay, they may drum or just watch and wait for an opportunity to play.

After a bit of drumming that includes demonstrations of proficiency by various age groups and individuals, the drummers get serious. They play and sing in groups of up to seven, giving it their all to play loud and sing louder. The building shakes with the beat, and you cannot hear yourself think. You eventually get lost in the rhythm of the drums and the drone of the singing. It is almost like being in a mystical trance or having an out-of-body experience. You feel present physically but are mentally far away. Throughout the performance people sporadically visit and lose themselves in the music.

When the "powerful" men of the community arrive, the Hand Games begin[3]. Sides are chosen, udzi's[4] chosen and captains agree on turns. New scoring sticks are brought out. Sticks for counting the points and betting are always new to each game. Clean white counting sticks,

freshly cut with an axe, seem to glow brightly against the dirty, scuffed floor of the Centre. Four to six men per team face one another in lines. The captain of a team, or a team member chosen by the captain to guess for a period of time, uses hand signals to indicate the believed location of a hidden object (udzi) in each of the opposition team member's hands. The guess is preceded by a loud clap, then the hand and finger formations of the guesser indicate the relative positions of the udzi in each hider's hands.

In order to hide an udzi, the hiders place their hands under a jacket, cloth or similar object and fumble, bounce or move it around to try to fool the guesser into believing that the udzi is in a certain hand. The objective, as hider, is to keep your udzi from being found by the opposition. When the udzi is in the desired hand, the hider brings out his closed hands and displays them in front of his body either straight out in front, crossed arms on the chest, crossed arms in front, or vertical arms on the chest. It must be in one of the hider's hands and both hands must be displayed in order for the guesser to signal his guess. The true location of the udzi is the question that only a skilled guesser will answer correctly. Once the udzi has been found, that hider is out of the game until his team has been completely eliminated, or the opposition has run out of sticks (usually 20) with which to back their guesses. If the guessing team finds all the udzi and eliminates the other team without losing its own supply of sticks, it wins that round. If the hiding team defends and forces the guessers to use up all their sticks then it wins that round and its eliminated players may rejoin the game. Rules vary on a given night to suit the needs of the day. The number of rounds that make up a game may be agreed upon in advance as may the number of games and players per side. Other rules may be agreed on by the teams before they start playing or during the game.

At some point during the game, one or two players may be all that are left playing and staving off a lost round. At this time the drummers and singers may perform with renewed vigour to support the last hider and help prevent his elimination. Extra drummers emerge and teammates and friends cheer on the hold-out. This action dominates all other activity in the Centre for a short period. Everyone watches or cheers as if it were professional hockey playoffs. When the round is over, whether win or lose, people go back to their previous activities and socializing.

It never really matters what event actually triggers the gatherings. The Culture Centre is a social place where gatherings are community events. If no one has a card game going, the regular group or groups of men will show up just to see what is going on and whether there is any activity that they can join. But if an evening has a men's hockey game, shinny game or a bingo scheduled, the Centre will most likely stay closed. Although it is the men who decide on the opening and closing of the Centre, the women and the kids are always welcome and always attend.

Priorities for the Recreation Committee

The fee schedule was our first priority during my first official meeting as Recreation Director. The fees had to be high enough to cover our operational costs so the new facility did not become a drain on the Hamlet's budget. Information was gathered from communities around the region concerning rental charges, events permitted and special fees. During this first meeting it was decided that the fees for the use of the arena and hall complex would be:

A) $250 Basic hall rental.
B) Non-profit organizations were under advisement suggesting 25% of the group's fundraising profits to a maximum of $250.
C) Concession revenue was not negotiable and belongs to the Recreation Committee.

Incorporated Hamlet of Fort Franklin
Recreation Committee Minutes
Minutes #1/91 (21/01-91)

The Recreation Committee thought the fee schedule was reasonable; however, once each group in the community had been made aware of the fee structure the complaints about the imposition of extra costs and the strain on already meagre financial resources began. Groups were using the Hall to try and make a profit to benefit their group's projects. They did not feel that a $250 rental fee was going to make the project profitable or even feasible. The operation and responsibility for the concession, during events, was another sore point, especially for the Youth Group. Sister Vincent, who coordinated the group, relied heavily on the baked goods, pop, and snack sales to increase the revenue generated during the Youth Group's functions. All of the groups agreed that it would be better for all concerned if the concession's revenue were included in the rental agreement. The Recreation Committee wanted the extra revenue from the concession sales but felt that the staffing of the concession could not be sustained by the Committee. Ultimately it

was decided that the concession would be included in the rental and the staff for it would be supplied by the group renting the hall[5].

6.2 Based upon consultation the following fee structure was suggested for the Arena/Hall and Gym Complexes.

	Rental	Deposit
Small Fundraising	$100.00	$50.00
Business Meeting	$100.00	$50.00
Public/Community Meeting	$0.00	$0.00

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Recreation Committee Minutes
Minutes #2/91 (04/02/91)

During the next Recreation Committee meeting we created a rental agreement form designed to outline the responsibilities and duties of groups wishing to rent or use the facility. The form was used for a short period, until renting groups understood the terms of the rental, then it was based on good will and at least a week's notice[6].

Coordination

Fort Franklin has two facilities, the Dene Culture Centre and the Arena and Hall Complex. The two needed to co-exist and eventually they did. The Culture Centre was designed for impromptu and planned activities that were small in size and for when the community needs to gather to reaffirm their traditional identity and closeness[7]. The Arena was necessary for hockey, free skating, and broomball. The Hall was there for bingos, large events such as multi-community feasts and dances, court proceedings and any function involving the outside political visitors. Each had a distinct and valuable function within the community and the community acknowledged that fact. There were barriers to the use of the hall but with patience and diligence, all were overcome.

Discussion

The three main considerations involved in operating two distinct and very different venues within one small community became quickly apparent. Which facility would be used was determined by an unwritten but clear set of rules. The first consideration being that within the community itself there were boundaries set between the Hamlet and the Band. These alliances were firmly entrenched within the community and could only be disregarded with the appearance of "outsiders". Visiting dignitaries, special events' speakers and even the Fort Franklin teachers were viewed as the outsiders. This second consideration was troubling as it was often hard to determine beforehand whether the "outsider" would be welcomed or rejected. On one occasion (discussed later in greater detail) the visitor was accepted warmly by one segment of the community while being snubbed by others. The final consideration involved primarily the Arena and Hall Complex, although the repercussions affected the use of the Culture Centre; to the Culture Centre's benefit.

Alliances Within the Community

Within the community the affiliation lines were carefully drawn. Groups in the community appeared to have an alignment to one of the two major controlling groups. This created a Hamlet versus Band atmosphere in many respects, an attitude that required constant consideration when dealing with the groups.

Hamlet	Band
Fort Franklin Housing Corporation	Fort Franklin Dene Development Corporation
Recreation (Hamlet Dept.)	Great Bear Lake Motel and Restaurant
?ehtseo Ayha School	Basic Awareness Program
RCMP/GNWT Justice Dept.	Youth Group
Great Bear Cooperative (30%)	Fort Franklin Hunters and Trappers Association
	Great Bear Cooperative (70%)
	GNWT Social Services

The choice of venue for an event that was made by each organization was often influenced by the organization's affiliations within the community and by the profile of the event. Band functions tended to be held in the Centre and Hamlet organized functions held in the arena/hall complex. The underlying political conflict that existed in the community became exemplified by the

events, their locations and the organizing group's affiliation. Only when Band functions required a larger venue and involved a high profile event were they held in the arena/hall complex.

The Band Council was also able to hold impromptu gatherings and functions and did not have to rely upon the Hall's availability, nor did they need to consult with their rival, the Hamlet, in order to use the Culture Centre.

The Culture Centre also had the distinction of being the informal meeting place. It was at the Culture Centre gatherings that many of the decisions relating to community issues were reached. People would come and go but the visiting and the discussions would continue through the night and even after the event. It seemed to allow for friendships to develop and be reinforced and for everyone to have a thoroughly enjoyable time while allowing important community decisions to be reached.

The "Outsiders" : Internal and External

Teachers from the south that flew in for the school year, and out again at the earliest opportunity, occupied an unusual place within the community. They lived within Fort Franklin but were generally still viewed as outsiders. Noticeably absent from a night at the Culture Centre were the teachers. They often only took part in events in which the school or the kids were involved and those events usually occurred at the Hall. Many teachers commented on how left out they felt when attending anything in the Culture Centre. They reminded me people who would watch events but not actually become involved, even if invited by other participants to join.

People visiting from outside the community, on official business, were often given the benefit of the doubt until their actual arrival. All visiting "dignitaries" were met at the airport and driven to the Hall where any meeting would take place. If the "dignitaries" were of aboriginal descent everyone would move to the Culture Centre in the evening for a drum dance. However, if the "dignitaries" were government representatives, or Euro-Canadian visitors, the dance would usually take place in the Hall. Rather than the usual relaxed atmosphere of the Culture Centre, the Hall fostered a much more formal display of community spirit and participation when "foreign dignitaries" were visiting. Travel considerations and schedules often made trips one day

events so evening festivities were rare. The "dignitaries" would arrive in the morning and leave in the late afternoon, almost slighting the prospect of any evening gathering, unless such an event had been scheduled and cleared by them prior to their arrival.

The community became adept at organizing last minute events for visitors who were forced to stay over due to weather or other delays. Pre-planning for visitors was not a necessity. Sometimes it was in the best interest of the community to wait for the visitor to arrive before planning a drum dance or feast. On the occasion that the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development came to sign an Agreement in Principle (A.I.P.) for the Sahtu Land Claims, the community and other visiting Sahtu region delegates were left feeling snubbed. Prior arrangements had been made for a feast and dance to follow the signing of the A.I.P.. Shortly before the Federal dignitaries arrived, the Council was informed that the Minister and his party would only be in the community for a period of two hours; just long enough to sign the document, shake hands and depart. Delegates from the region were exhausted from the work that was done to get the completed document prepared and organize the festivities. Three people had worked the entire two days (and nights) to prepare the final copy. They were looking forward to the celebration and I am sure would have appreciated being honoured for their contribution to the Sahtu region.

A very hostile, but subdued crowd greeted the Minister. The tension remained until the Minister and his delegation left the community and people were able to vent their frustrations. The celebrations were moved to the Culture Centre and we all had a great time. The anger and resentment towards the Minister and the Government of Canada eventually subsided, leaving only a prevailing feeling of "Well, what do you expect?". This attitude towards *moula* (Slavey slang for white man) had been reinforced by many of the people and groups from the South that had visited the community. Time and time again people flew in, flew out and did not pause long enough to appreciate the surroundings, the people or their hospitality. It's no wonder that it took time and constant reinforcement to prove that my wife and I were not like previous white visitors.

A unique situation occurred when a young native man from the Feather of Hope Organization[8], invited by the community, arrived only to discover that he was welcomed by only a small

segment of the population. This did not, and would not have, become apparent until the Youth Group decided to hold a dance for him at the Culture Centre. Despite the Band's advance knowledge of their plans, the key for the Centre could not be found. Sister Pat and her assistants from B.A.P. were concerned about their plans for a feast and drum dance for the occasion. The Chief could not be found to open the door and neither could the key be located. Despite the earlier visible and vocal support for the young man, the underlying feeling of the "officials" was that this was not an appropriate subject for the entire community and that the risk of AIDS was minimal to Fort Franklin residents. After some discussion among the younger members of the community, several health workers, and the "officials", the key was finally located and a small gathering consisting solely of younger residents was held in the Centre. None of the Hamlet or Band Councillors were present, nor did they make time to meet with the young man from the Feather of Hope. When the Centre was finally opened and the feast begun, there was a limited number of drummers who played and sang a few songs. It was an uncomfortable atmosphere. There was no dancing and only hesitant talking, with the function finishing at an early 8:00PM. The next night there was a Hand Game and the place was packed, without a mention of the previous day's events.

One had to be careful not to classify a visitor before their actual arrival as this could lead to unforseen headaches and scheduling hassles.

Southern Structure and Rules

Initially the Recreation Committee and I decided to implement some basic rules and guidelines for the Arena and Hall Complex. Unfortunately, we imported common rules and guidelines from the south. This effectively all but shut down the use of the Complex.

Rules for the use of the new Hall were necessary but were difficult to design to meet both the needs of the community and the needs of the Arena and Hall. They were also very difficult to enforce in the beginning. The final set of rules that the Hamlet and the community in general agreed upon included cleaning up afterwards, not smoking inside the building, not using the emergency lights for spotlights during dances, preventing children under sixteen years from entering the hall during Bingo (A GNWT Lottery Regulation violation that could result in the

loss of a licence!) and not using the emergency doors as extra entrances and exits. As with any new facility the rules had to be tried, reworked and sometimes just discarded.

Deposits and threats of being barred from future use made people clean up their messes after an event (Recreation Committee Minutes #2, 1991: 4). The emergency lights were always being tested, by having a dance. The mayor decided to deal with the issue of the young children in the hall during the bingos and the mothers of the habitual offenders were spoken with. Kids were allowed to play within the outside lobby and in front of the building, never again venturing into the Hall during game play. Smoking was eventually allowed in the small lobby area, but the fire doors were always open for smoke breaks which allowed us to keep the lobby basically smoke free except during large functions. Fire doors were patrolled occasionally, just to keep up the appearance of enforcing regulations.

Smoking was one activity where the preference for the Culture Centre was obvious. Smoking was allowed in the Centre which definitely allowed a more casual atmosphere and meant that the smokers did not miss out on the games. The non-smoking environment of the Hall was one of the most important steps taken to maintain the building. Smoking and its refuse has caused countless dollars of damage to facilities across the Arctic. Yet despite the best attempts in other communities to maintain a non-smoking policy for a new facility, most were unable to do so. In Fort Franklin the rule stuck and was supported by the community, after we conceded to the use of the lobby for a smoking area so that participants did not have to actually leave the building in order to indulge their habit. This situation worked quite well for the duration of my stay and helped to preserve the Hall, especially its floors.

The rules almost broke the Arena and Hall Complex. Alliances within the community aside, if we had not been able to adapt and adjust to the needs of the community, I am sure that the facility would only have been used for emergency meetings.

Synthesis

Fort Franklin has two discrete group meeting venues. Both are used for their intended purposes and are now utilized to their full potential. The three considerations that determine the venue to be used are understandable and clear cut once you accept their inevitability.

The posturing of the Hamlet over the new Arena and Hall Complex and the Band's determination to have their facility, the Culture Centre, be the main community gathering place will likely continue no matter what happens within the community. The two sides do however work well together when it benefits all of Fort Franklin; neither group would allow their political differences to interfere with the actual advancement of the community or culture.

Venues and control reflected a change of culture at the macro level. The Centre was seen as symbolic of contemporary revitalized culture whereby events taking place in the Centre were of importance to aboriginal cultural identity and a departure from assimilated values, being reflected by the Arena and Hall complex.

The dynamic nature of boundary defining is illustrated by the selection of venue relating to a particular event. Traditional values are highlighted when associated with activities involving the Band and/or the Culture Centre. Contemporary, but more so southern attitudes, associated with activities involving the Hamlet and or the Arena and Hall complex.

The dynamic structure of each organization, and their alliance with activities reinforce Sahtudene beliefs and ideals. They are ever present in daily recreation and form a syncretism of culture traits within a contemporary society. The structure of power created, albeit short term, by the occurrence of a recreation event further emphasizes the important definition and modification of a contemporary Sahtudene society, one that replaces the model exuded by the southern model for sport and recreation.

Each venue fully supports the changing identity of the Sahtudene with respect to their association of cultural importance and activity. Community based events use the Centre, while display's of

cultural strength and whole community displays make use of the Hall, where the increased number of participants can convert the Hall to a contemporary forum.

Chapter Notes

1. One resident of Fort Franklin saw that drumming was being lost in the community. His father was a drum maker but no one was playing among the youth. He decided to teach several young boys to drum... evident by the young men (20-26 yrs) who were able to drum, sing and take part in traditional events.

2. The elder in consideration is a revered elder among the Dene. His traditional skills and wisdom are often sought. He is a quiet man, always listening to the community and nature. He lives in a modest home in Fort Franklin and a modest cabin on the land. Many Dene make reference to his importance and influence on life in the region, and often emulate his lifestyle in an attempt to improve themselves.

3. For a complete discussion and analysis of the Hand Game refer to *The Dogrib Hand Game* (Helm & Lurie, 1966).

4. The udzi {also spelled idzi (Heine, 1996)} is the token chosen by players to hide in ones hand while playing the Hand Game. It is often an item that is of significance in the life of the player and is said to have *medicine* for that player to give them skill, luck or support in play.

5. As a gesture of good will, the Recreation Committee eventually began providing at least two volunteers for all events held in the Arena/Hall complex. This worked very well on both sides, as it allowed us to trouble shoot problems quickly and thus the event often ran smoother than it would have.

6. The rental agreement included the basic rules of the hall (no smoking, no skates to be worn in the lobby or the hall, age restrictions for bingos, etc.) as well as specifically identifying the responsibilities of the group renting the hall. The group was to set up for the activity, although the chairs and tables would be taken out of storage by the Arena/Hall employees, the group had to set them out, organize and run the activity and the concession, and enforce the rules of the complex. Everyone was very good about respecting the rules and conditions inherent in renting the Hall, as all understood that the rules were in place to preserve the brand new complex.

7. Refer to Culture Centre analysis regarding the gathering that occurred after the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs arrived to sign the Sahtu Agreement in Principle.

8. The Feather of Hope organization is an awareness and support group started in Vancouver that assists native people who have been afflicted or affected by AIDS and its related diseases. The

gentleman who came was part of a northern awareness program aimed at preventing the spread of AIDS and related diseases throughout the North. The North, with its high incidence of unprotected sexual activity was seen as a potential time bomb waiting to go off. Youth must be educated about the need for safe sex practices at all times and the Feather of Hope sought to educate all Native peoples about the risks and potential for an epidemic across the North if changes and awareness education were not present.

CHAPTER 6

CASE STUDY: FORT FRANKLIN SPRING CARNIVAL

This chapter is in the format of a case study. The case under consideration is the Spring Carnival in Fort Franklin that occurred from May 3 to 5, 1991 under the direction of the Recreation Committee and the Recreation Director. It was an opportunity for the community to celebrate the changing ecology of their world and to acknowledge the beginning of another season. Traditional and contemporary Sahtudene culture influenced the Euro-Canadian structure of administration that organized the details of the three day community event. The event was the most successful community event organized by a Recreation Director. The success, however, was due to the interaction of traditional and contemporary cultural processes of organization.

Fort Franklin Carnival

A Spring Carnival is an expected part of any recreation program in the North. It signals the beginning of a new season and a rebirth of growth for the area. The weather is warmer, the snow almost gone and the people want to get out and enjoy the change.

Around the community the carnival concept was a major source of conversation. I researched past carnivals (and attempts) in the region and in Fort Smith, Inuvik and Yellowknife. The overall atmosphere created by even the thought of holding a carnival in Franklin was electric. Many people talked to me about previous carnivals and events that they had attended, some had gone to cultural or community gatherings, many had gone to sports tournaments.

All the gatherings and tournaments seemed to include an activity day followed by a dance in the evening. Many held other events and contests as components of a family or community oriented day of fun. Sports tournaments often held an awards feast on the last day. Fort Franklin residents wanted a bingo, a dance and some fun family activities.

The venue best suited for the family activity day was the lake ice in front of the Great Bear Lake Co-operative. Sunshine, booths, events, start lines, and easy access were all present, or feasible, at this location. The space was large enough to hold the crowd of people anticipated to be

present. The hall would be the ideal venue for the bingo or dance, but those ideas were postponed until the family activities could be finalized.

High on the list of concerns for the Recreation Committee was the issue of finance. Although a profit could assist in future recreation programs, the major concern was to avoid a huge debt as a result of the carnival. Expenses could be high because of the extravagant and grandiose plans that many were considering to be essential parts of the carnival. No one wanted the event to get out of hand!

Activities were planned for Saturday and Sunday. During the day, family activities were to be held on the ice. Games included Guess the Number of Mojo's, Hit a Target and Win, Four Person Skiing, Caribou Head Skinning, Rifle Shooting and Snowmobile Racing. On Saturday evening a country and western band from Yellowknife was to be flown in to provide music for a dance. Church service was to be held at 11 o'clock Sunday morning as usual and followed by a community feast later in the day. During the two days, however, many activities occurred that were spontaneous and added to the fun of the whole carnival.

Planning and Organization

The concept of a carnival was not new to any of the residents. Many communities have carnivals and sport tournaments at various times throughout the year. The unique aspect of this carnival was going to be the live band. This would be the first professional band to entertain in Fort Franklin; many residents had never seen such a live performance. The events and activities were designed to involve the entire community. Previously, the Recreation Director had only been able to hold a small event for kids without the support of other community residents. It was described to me by residents as a day where the Director took some balloons, paints and sticks and went and set up a table on the lake ice. Some kids went to play, adults stood and wondered what was the purpose of this "Moula" standing on the ice with a table and some trinkets. Nobody appeared impressed by the attempt; in fact, it was quite a joke even to refer to the "Carnival". The lack of community spirit in the co-ordination and promotion of the past carnival was noted by the Recreation Committee for later comparison.

The Recreation Committee wanted the entire community involved in some aspect of their 1991 carnival. Support and sponsorship from outside agencies was obtained. Every service and social group in the community was canvassed to support the committee's efforts. No support was too small. Holding a pole with a baby bottle on it, unloading a plane full of musical equipment, cooking caribou burgers, making signs- all tasks were important and everyone was asked to help. After the event, other western Arctic communities commented on our success in involving the whole community in the carnival.

A special planning meeting for the carnival, to address potential themes, costs, events, and volunteers was set for April 22, 1991, and community residents and organizations were asked to attend. We wanted the whole community to be involved in the event from the beginning. The two themes proposed by members of the Recreation Committee and the community were "May Day" and "Pagan", following the traditions of many European carnivals and festivals held in the spring. However, these themes did not represent traditional Dene activities, lifestyles or related themes and were therefore not approved by the Committee as themes for the carnival.

In order to continue it being a community function, the cost of this carnival had to be supported through community resources and community sanctioned sponsorships. The costs could not outweigh the benefits. Many people wanted their ideas to be the only ones used, so that they could obtain that sense of importance that was given an individual for providing something for the community. This desire for public recognition was an attempt to increase their influence and thus gain status in the community. Many such individuals suggested events and ideas that would have cost the Recreation Committee a great deal of money to implement. Other ideas would only benefit one individual or one part of the community. All such ideas were politely discouraged.

The ideas were politely rejected because we did not want to alienate anyone- especially those who we needed to volunteer. As with many ideas and events, the participation and commitment that is offered during the development of the program is great but differs significantly from the actual involvement by volunteers at the time of the event. Commitment to ideas and commitment to actual involvement in their implementation are two separate issues of varying importance. The status gained by the offering of ideas is often greater than the perceived status of working to see that the idea is developed and completed.

Differing levels of expectations were present throughout the planning stages of the carnival. Many suggestions and ideas were offered and some proved to be vital to the success of the carnival. Some, however, did not get past being a suggestion.

People often made suggestions and expected them to be automatically made part of the program. When suggestions were not included as part of the carnival, those making them often chastised the members of the Recreation Committee for not doing their jobs or for not listening to the community's requests. It did not seem to occur to the person suggesting that the idea did not become part of the carnival because of a lack of involvement on their part. Implementation of a suggestion by the Committee was just assumed, all that was required from others was the suggestion.

Volunteers and the Actual Event

The help that is required to make an event a success often depends on the community and its attitudes towards certain groups. On the day of an event, groups or individuals who have demonstrated a commitment to helping with the event, begin to make themselves known. This creates a situation where levels of participation and levels of support are not known until the actual start time of the event. If the event is acceptable to certain people, support is abundant. If, however, the support is not there, it is usually due to an obvious lack of interest or opposition from certain members of the community.

The Carnival date was set for May 3-5, 1991, and information from other carnivals in the Arctic was examined for content possibilities in Fort Franklin. Most of the members of the Committee were excited about the opportunity and supported the programs. People from other groups were asked to take part and make the carnival a community affair for all ages.

The Basic Awareness Program[1] (B.A.P.) arranged to sponsor the bingo, getting a special licence for the Friday night event. Special prizes on top of game prizes were arranged. The $1000 jackpot to conclude the night even set a precedent for future "feature" bingos. In addition to the bingo, B.A.P. also set up a tent on the edge of the ice to operate a small concession on Saturday and Sunday.

The B.A.P.'s canvas tent housed food and beverages for sale to all who passed. Unfortunately, since the Co-op was right behind the tent, the sales were slow. The manager of the Co-op generously agreed to close early and not open on Sunday so as to boost the B.A.P.'s sales. In the front of the tent were two 45-gallon drums cut and fitted out as barbecues. Hot dogs and caribou burgers were fried and filled the air with delicious smells, adding to the carnival atmosphere.

The unseasonably warm weather, ice melting patterns, and timing helped the Spring Carnival become the "Slush" Carnival. By Saturday, May 4 some of the carnival's ice area had started to melt and form candle ice[2]. The rest of the site was turning to slush. As wet and sometimes dangerous as these conditions were, it did not deter anyone from going onto the ice by foot, sled, snowmobile or truck to enjoy the festivities.

The Carnival schedule was arranged as follows:

Friday: Pancake Breakfast and "Carnival Prayer"
-celebrity flippers
-before work
Bingo [Sponsored by the Basic Awareness Program]
-single event licence
Parents & Kids broomball in the arena (during bingo)

Saturday:
Kids pellet gun target shooting
Adult .3030 target shooting
Egg throw
Board slush skiing (4 people per ski)
Baby bottle sucking contest
Pillow skipping
Spear tossing (distance and accuracy)
Puck shooting (targets)
Nail driving
Caribou head skinning contest [Sponsored by the Band]
Dance & Talent show (Live Music by Earnest Constance)

Sunday:
Ski-doo races
Log sawing
Wood cutting
Toboggan pull (kids pull adults)
3 person relay
Tea boiling [Sponsored by the Band]
Church (17:00)
Feast and Drum Dance

Little or no advanced preparation was made for many of the activities. To have the equipment, and one volunteer, available for the activities was enough. Little or no attempt was made to register participants in advance. Support would be shown at the time of the activity by the number of people that could be rounded up to participate. Usually the kids were more than eager to take part, and in some cases the adults would also join or take over the activity.

Only the more important events, such as snowmobiling and the dance, were actually pre-registered. The target shooting was suppose to be "sign up as you go", but most men had indicated an interest several days before, making sure the event would be held despite the lack of pre-registration. The amount of discussion for a particular event was a gauge for its relative success. If discussion at coffee was for an event, then the event was sure to succeed. If planned events were not discussed, then the organizing volunteers were fairly sure that participants would have to be enticed during the days leading up to the carnival and on the day of the carnival. Of the scheduled events, spear tossing, wood cutting and tea boiling were not held.

Many events that were scheduled for a particular time, became day events. Although the schedule specified a time, most people did the event at their leisure during the four hours or so of that carnival day. They recorded a score and waited for the end of the day to see who was the winner amongst the participants from that day. Had the event been held at a specified time, it probably would have failed because of lack of interest. This time modification allowed for more participants and fit the fluid interest that seems typical of a Dene carnival atmosphere.

The event of most importance was the adult .3030 target shooting. Adult males were the dominant participants although a few adult females did shoot. The males prided themselves on each shot at targets placed about 200 metres away. Only one participant hit a target. Although he was declared the winner he had only won the prize, not the title. The men declared the rifles to be the reason for the best shooter's not winning the contest. According to them, the great number of shots being fired over such a short period of time resulted in the barrels becoming too hot to expect accurate sighting on the targets; the competition would have been closer had the equipment been more reliable; the "winner" was just lucky.

Having the guns overheat was not a real problem for the participants. Each had the option of bringing his own rifle (.3030) and none choose to do so. The spirit of being together and having fun laughing at each other was the event. Women and men alike were heckled and compared to other shooters who had missed the targets. Inexperienced shooters were hailed as heroes for shooting with such accuracy (although the shots taken were mostly lost and not trackable with the naked eye).

Three women had the nerve to pick up the rifles and take part in the shooting event. They were initially cheered on in their efforts. Many men gave advice on which end to hold, what to do next, and to hold on tight. The men who cheered and whistled were almost mocking the attempt by these women to participate as an equal in an (skill) event that was viewed as being for men only. The limited number of women, their status in the community, and the lack of encouragement for other women to take part reinforced the defined roles for men and women in the community. The women who shot were self-confident, managers of local services. Single and employed, they had the gumption to stand and attempt the event, not fearing the repercussions. After the first contestant, others were encouraged to take part. After a few more were recruited no others were game to try. The crowd of men cheering on the first women dissipated, apparently showing their disapproval for the continued encouragement of women in a man's event. Many women laughed and joked about beating the men, but few were willing to try, knowing they were going against certain community mores. The message was fairly clear, the women could run or volunteer at any of the events but only certain events were they allowed to enter.

For the kids, the event and the place to be was at a table organized and run by several teachers. Throwing accuracy activities were played that rewarded the participants with novelty toys and games. The children delighted at receiving wigs made with multi-coloured tinsel, whistles, model aeroplanes that soared across the ice and pencils that wrote in several colours at once. Contrary to the target shooting, the activity was secondary to the prize one received for trying. If a prize was received that was a duplicate, then the child would barter for another with the booth supervisor or try to trade with another child who did not have the prize and might want it. This trading went on around town for days after the carnival was over.

With all the fun activities, organized and run by volunteers, it was easy to forget the actual cost of the carnival, until you remembered the dance. To fly one person in from Yellowknife cost around $600. To fly a band, complete with equipment, on a charter (return) and provide accommodations cost $9,250.00. The population of the community was assumed to be 606 thus $15.26 was required from every resident just to break even. The population expected to attend the dance was less than 50% of the community, effectively doubling the price of admission. Revenue generated by ticket sales and concession revenue from the event amounted to $5,908.29. This amount was considerably short of the funds needed to break even.

In order to make up the difference, the Recreation Committee decided to spend some of the money obtained and generated from previous recreation events. It also agreed to offset the balance owing, should the accounts not contain sufficient funds to cover the losses, through bingos and other events over the fiscal year. $3,341.71 was lost on the dance part of the carnival but the net loss for the whole carnival event was $3,252.05. Although we took a huge loss financially, the community spirit could not have been better. A very emotionally successful event.

My Views: Looking Back on the Carnival

The planning by the Recreation Committee for the Carnival was completed after consultation with many residents of the community. This was my first exposure to the power struggle between the Hamlet and the Band. It was not until the activities had been planned and the final schedule was drafted that a representative from the Band Council informed me of the activities that the Band would sponsor. These were to represent the importance of Dene culture and the traditions of the community.

During the planning stages each community organization was asked to become involved in the Carnival. Suggestions, assistance and support were solicited from each group, and an open door policy was always maintained in order to ensure active participation by all interested parties and individuals. The Band was the first group consulted about the Carnival plans. The activity was brought to their direct attention during a regular Band Meeting. The plans for the activity, timing, location and significance of the activity were discussed with the attending members of

the Band Council. No interest was expressed by any Band member to become actively involved in the planning and preparation for the activity, however, the Band Council, on behalf of the Band and its members, indicated their support by passing a motion recognizing the activity, and an offer of assistance (should it be required for a particular activity) was made.

Of the Recreation Committee members, one was a Band Councillor, one was a Manager of a company owned by the Band and several were Band Members. At no time during the preparations and planning for this event was it suggested that the Band play a more active role in any aspect of the event. It was not until the carnival was nearing its final stages of readiness that the Band recognized the excitement and enthusiasm that the community was displaying towards the event. At that time they became interested. The carnival was shaping into a major event that would surely be a success. This success by the Hamlet appointed Recreation Committee would place the Band in a secondary position relative to the fulfilment of resident needs. The Band is the representative of the Dene and the Hamlet was seen as an administrative body that facilitated access to GNWT municipal and territorial programs. The Band was the people, and the people were now apparently being attended to by the Hamlet and its recreation program.

I felt that the Band wanted to be recognized as an important part of the community and thus demanded to be part of the carnival. This opportunity to participate had always been available and in fact the Band had been encouraged to participate in any way it deemed appropriate. Ultimately they dictated that several events, *traditional in nature*, would be recognized as the events for the people sponsored by the Band.

A carnival is usually linked to a theme. This carnival was linked to the idea of having fun in the spring and the renewal of warmer weather. Possible traditional themes would probably have related to getting out on the land again with the family, hunting, fishing and other "survival on the land" motifs. The organization and the community spirit being generated for the carnival were noticed throughout the region. The Band did not expect this level of excitement to be created by the Recreation Committee. Perhaps, given past events and levels of participation, they expected something less elaborate. They exerted their power as Band Councillors and representatives of the people in order to be included and to avoid being left out or being seen as

not supportive of the event that the rest of the community was raving about and eager to take part in.

Could the event be repeated? I think not. The level of enthusiasm and support was temporarily based on the completed construction of a new recreational facility and a new Recreation Director with the Hamlet. The longer I lived in Franklin the more I became aware of the community's differing levels of support for various events and programs. I noticed a gradual decrease in the enthusiasm towards recreation programs that were repetitious. Unique and fresh programs that piqued the interest of certain parties did continue successfully, but large, long term programs were doomed to fail because support fell off. Maybe years from now, a new Recreation Director and the next generation could pull it off. I sincerely hope so because it is one of my fondest memories of the people of Fort Franklin.

Analysis

Elements of ecological awareness were prevalent in the overall reason behind the carnival. The influence of Dene Time (discussed in Chapter 7) and the administrative structures involved in the planning and implementation of the event were very important to further emphasize the Sahtudene cultural influences.

Three sub-themes emerged from the Spring Carnival data. The first being the generational gap and the need for a bridge to be made between the youth and the elders. The second was the previous recreation director's history of dominance versus the community's needs and desires; I needed to prove myself to the community. The community had to be the beginning, middle and only focus for this event to work. The third was the ongoing political posturing between the Hamlet Council and the Band Council. The event was being organized and implemented by the Hamlet appointed Recreation Committee, however, the Band must be included in the actual planning of the events and in the scheduling of certain activities.

The empowerment of a new recreation director to present an event that addressed the changing needs of the community with an element of ecological sensitivity is an important contrast to what should have taken place. The previous failure of a recreation director to effectively meet

community needs during a period of transition, did influence the support received by me during my attempt to hold a carnival in the community. Although there was a new recreation director, many people did not think that the situation or the event would be any different than the previous attempt.

Community residents did not fully support the initial plans for the carnival. The suggestion that a live band be brought into the community was met with scepticism, in part due to the group who had suggested the concept. Many of the youth and young adults wanted the opportunity to party, and this was an ideal opportunity to create a festive atmosphere. A party in Fort Franklin would imitate a "party" in Yellowknife, the much desired trip for many people in the community. To have the party locally, without the expense of flying to Yellowknife, would be fantastic. The group that was supportive of the band as a part of the carnival were youths, and as such not fully respected by many older members of the community. It was on this issue that the contemporary and the traditional initially clashed.

Many people spoke of the "extra's" that would come with the carnival and the band. The substance abuse, potential damage to facilities, neglect of family (especially kids, who would not be allowed to attend and other issues). These were all serious issues that initially detracted from the family theme and fun nature of the event. Through the development of a formal set of rules that addressed these concerns, the band was eventually accepted as a part of the carnival. Many elders purchased tickets to come and see the first professional band to play in Fort Franklin. All of them appeared to have a good time and stayed until the last song.

The development of a carnival that involved the entire community, all ages, was an important change from the prior attempt at a carnival. The family was a very important part of Sahtudene life, and to have the opportunity to participate was in the best interest of everyone, and supported the traditional family grouping.

The comments that residents made concerning previous attempts at a carnival made reference to the actions of the recreation director. Her expectation, informants said, seemed to be one of 'follow the leader' or 'Simon says'. If she put a table with some balloons and a few games near the lake, people would have to come and have a carnival. The event was reported to have been

the recreation director and a few people standing on the lake waiting for a carnival to occur. The community did not get involved, nor did they appear to want to be involved, given the lack of coherent planning.

The relative success of the 1991 spring carnival was due to the involvement of all the community. The Recreation Committee made an effort to involve everyone, the people who helped organize and operate each event encouraged others. The excitement generated before and during the carnival was contagious, because it was not limited.

The excitement of the event drew the attention of the Band. As previously indicated, the Band did not formally enter into the carnival until the last possible moment of the planning stage. It initially appeared as though the Band was being placed in a negative light and purposefully excluded because of recent events in the community. The Chief and Band Counsellors were spending increasing amounts of time with land claim issues and in developing political power without fully attending to local issues and residents' needs. Hamlet programs were providing more for residents than the Band programs were. Basic needs such as water, power, sewage and housing were being provided under programs that used local economic contracts and labour. People did not see what the Band was doing, other than complaining and using political pressure to provide limited resources to a limited number of politically well-connected people and families. The Hamlet, with its new recreation facility and Recreation Director, was, for once, in the spotlight.

The critical examination of the event within the context of this research may be interpreted in at least two ways. One way is to assume that the Band was feeling upstaged, and that the traditional events for the community should be the domain of the Band alone. The other way to interpret the situation was that the Band had planned to be involved, but would not symbolically approve and participate until they were satisfied with the event; they would only support a community event.

The position of the Band's role in the Carnival and the Band's interpretation of the carnival are both important. Both must be considered to reflect the role of traditional culture and contemporary culture in the community. The Band, unsure as to the degree of respect that would

be shown to the Sahtudene culture, wanted to observe and evaluate the situation created by a carnival. The momentum and excitement of the process was indicative of a southern event, and to prematurely condone such cultural variation could be interpreted as further cultural domination. The live band, themes, some of the events, organizational structure, and other aspects of the carnival were seen as non-Sahtudene. Once the community was fully involved however, the traditional network of communication became key to the preparation and planning of the event. Dene Time, as discussed in chapter 7, took over the process and the traditional culture of the Sahtudene emerged in a contemporary event.

Planning and Preparation for an Activity

The development of any idea eventually leads to a need for material construction. Actual events have materials that must be present in order for the event to take place. For the carnival, the gathering and construction of material, procurement of supplies, prizes, and sponsorship, as well as volunteer recruitment occurred in Dene Time. On the day of the event the material would be present, without worry, without hassle (except on getting it to the site). People would show up and participate, even if the operator of the event had to go and get people, take them to the site of the event and help them participate. Eventually, of their own volition, everybody had been and seen everything that was on the lake site that day.

The events were planned to follow a schedule. The idea was to create a flow from event to event and maximize the number of participants and spectators. This was not what actually happened. As the carnival dates approached, few people had signed up to help work the events. The only people helping were the members of the Recreation Committee, and there were only a few of them. A few more people had signed up to actually take part in some events. But this situation did not bother anyone, they were confident, despite the low registration, that it would be a good carnival with lots of people.

On the day of the event people came to have fun. The events did work best with spontaneous participation, that could never have been scheduled. The people present became participants, assistants, ticket takers, hot dog sellers, and spectators. The events and days were exciting, the

format and the "schedule" uncertainty created excitement. Traditional planning had worked again. For the events that did not occur, despite the planning; maybe next time.

Some spontaneous occurrences, not associated with specific events, created even more enjoyment for the community. The kids' booth prizes were bartered and traded throughout Fort Franklin for weeks after. The most prized "trophy" was a metallic, multi-coloured shimmer wig, worn by each and every kid at least once. A three quarter ton, four wheel drive truck that had fallen through the ice had to be pulled out of the ice ruts by thirty or more people; this was the tug-o-war. The community had the best laugh and cheer for the only non-Sahtudene entrant in the caribou head skinning contest. She finished in eight minutes or so, only seven minutes behind the winner. The carnival was a true celebration of the Sahtudene ecological spirit, involving the whole community.

After the family events, the bingo, the dance, mass and the other associated and non-associated events were complete, the community met at the hall to find out the winners of each event. Here, the importance was not on the status of the person for winning, or the bragging rights to be determined, but the reinforcement of the spirit and community cohesion. The winners were all very humble when accepting their prizes. All winners were cheered, and some non-winners too. The jokes and comments about the people were constant, as laughter filled the hall. The winner of the "Guess the Number of Mojo's" contest received about five hundred Mojo's, then promptly threw several handfuls over his shoulder into the middle of the Hall starting a furious scramble amongst the kids. The floor was suddenly alive with all the kids trying to get a piece of candy.

For these individuals and the many others who received various forms of prizes, the acknowledgement of momentary success was too long. The event, more so than the results, was the important part. Humility in a participant was important as was not boasting or putting down others. Individuals who displayed disdain, or who could not show the proper amount of humility, had their actions reflected on their own lifestyle. Their behaviour went against the values of the Sahtudene.

Synthesis

The Spring Carnival in Fort Franklin was an opportunity for the community to celebrate the changing ecology of the world around them. The changing world is very much an important part of life for the Sahtudene, and is reflected in their recreational pursuits. Recreation must undergo the process of change that other components of community life have gone through. While some aspects of recreation have been adopted by residents of Fort Franklin, some must still undergo change before they fit the needs of the community. The syncretism of southern and northern recreation that culminated in a successful carnival are examined.

Traditional and contemporary Sahtudene culture influenced the Euro-Canadian structure of administration that organized the details of the community event. The event was the most successful community ever organized by a Recreation Director. The success, however, was due to the interaction of traditional and contemporary cultural processes of organization during the entire event, from initial planning to the conclusion.

All three sub-themes, once identified, were easily addressed with by the community. The community was completely involved, from the youngest to the oldest, from the Band and the Hamlet; everyone had their moment that was uniquely theirs. Respect for the environmental concerns, accepting that the events would be scheduled according to their own time table and allowing the initial political posturing to occur made this event possible. This event was talked about, bragged about, and embellished upon for months afterwards.

Chapter Notes

1. The Basic Awareness Program is a substance abuse program coordinated and run at the community level. It deals with all sorts of dependencies and family matters that pertain to the effective functioning of individuals and groups in Dene life. Many of the local programs are linked to parent programs such as AL-ANON, ALATEEN, Alcoholics Anonymous and Family violence programs. The nature of this group's involvement in the community is such that it must rely on some funding from outside sources and some from the community. In this situation the Bingo is an ideal fundraiser, bringing in large amounts of cash with which to fund programs and offer sponsorship for residents who wish to leave the community and seek assistance in special programs not available locally.

It is interesting to note that one of the functions of the B.A.P. is to assist people in overcoming a dependency on substances or actions. One program is set up to assist gambling addicts, yet by putting on a Bingo to raise funds for its own programs, B.A.P. places themselves in a precarious position. Funding is limited and other methods of community based fundraising do not raise the capital that a Bingo does in such a short period. Supporting many addicts' gambling habit to raise needed funds to maintain a program that helps them reduce their dependency on gambling seems to be a self-perpetuating cycle. Yet without funds many other programs would suffer; some more important programs such as substance abuse and recovery programs need Bingo generated funds.

2. The vertical crystals of ice allowed the passage of water in small streams to low points and moved under the foot like slush. If one was to fall upon it, however, the sharp edges of the ice easily cut into flesh and clothing.

CHAPTER 7
ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

Ethnic boundary maintenance (Barth, 1969) in the field of recreation and sport among the Sahtudene of the Great Bear Lake region was the primary analytical focus of this study. For Barth, cultural reproduction is a function of those forms of behaviour that serve to delimit and express forms of group membership recognizable to the members of the group themselves, thereby constituting categories of and for group membership distinguishable from other categories of the same order. The construction and reproduction of such categories ultimately serves to maintain group coherence, facilitating the survival of the group as a culturally and ethnically distinct unit, over time.

As the preceding chapters have argued, the reconstruction of cultural norms and values, and thus of group and ethnic identity among the Sahtudene during the time period under consideration, occurred at a point of considerable political and social displacement. To understand the implications of these specific processes of partly enforced change, the theories of Gurston Dacks (1981, 1990) were utilized. Dacks analyzes these processes of change in terms of degrees of colonization, and of decolonization in view of the recent re-discovery and strengthening of Sahtudene political and cultural identity. These processes provide the context within which the work of the recreation professional in remote northern communities is situated.

Professional Recreation Administration

In the area of recreation, the administrative role of the Recreation Director can itself be considered as a primary manifestation of colonization in Dacks' sense, if not by personal intent, then by organizational practice and inclinations. The organizational model followed by recreation administrators in the northern communities was originally designed within the context of a distinctly different cultural environment, i.e., those of the southern urban centres. As such, the model addresses needs and reproduces value orientations that diverge markedly from those of the northern communities.

Further, until recently recreation and sports program in the north have been largely managed by recreation professionals brought in from the south. These professionals have mainly been trained in southern institutions and according to curriculums that are designed to meet the needs of southern communities. Work experience and role behaviours are developed within this context of the southern system of recreation administration. Such experiences do not sufficiently prepare recreation professionals for employment in northern communities. Administrative approaches which are initially brought into the north by these professionals, therefore, are often those of the southern urban centres.

Paraschak (n.d.) has referred to the imposition of this administrative model, which limits the possibilities for the expression of traditional cultural values, as the 'heterotransplantation' of the southern system of organized recreation into the north. In view of such 'heterotransplantation,' Adams (1978) suggested as early as the mid-1970s, that the implementation of recreational programs should reflect the traditional cultural need of northern communities.

The 'Recreation Leadership Program' recently developed at Arctic College (Inuvik's Aurora campus) is designed to alter these personnel recruitment patterns in favour of northern aboriginal recreation students. It is structured to meet the educational needs of aboriginal recreation students, devoting a considerable amount of time to gaining practical experiences at the community level. It is not possible at this juncture in time to assess the program's long-term viability and success.

The encroachment of this southern administrative model into the north is indicated at the community level from the Recreation Committee's own insistence on implementing the model's organizational aspects. Initially, the committee members perceived a necessity to impose a fee structure to regulate orderly access to the facilities; to introduce a general schedule for daily community participation; and in fact to continue the committee's administrative work for the sole purpose of securing the funding required for its continued existence.

These processes of change, in which those who are the subject of the pressures towards colonization actively participate in the construction of organizational models furthering such pressures, clearly indicate the aptness of Dacks' statements. For the Sahtudene, the definition of

an ethnic identity is significantly affected by the pressures brought to bear by the dominant southern culture.

Ethnic Identity and Organization of Recreation

Yet traditional cultural and ethnic identity can be perceived even within the context of these pressures towards change, and here within the workings of organized recreation itself. In this specific context, the reinforcement of traditional values and norms frequently occurred in implicit opposition to the organizational intent of organized recreation. While such opposition may not have been grounded in an explicit motivation to stage opposition, its form was rooted in the traditional value system and norms. In this specific manifestation, such opposition was in itself an act of reproduction of cultural identity. However, this boundary maintenance does not appear as the action of a unified group; rather, certain internal conflicts could be observed whose origins themselves can be attributed to the functioning of elements of traditional cultural identity. Within these complex processes, several major sub-themes emerged.

Organization of Recreation: Scheduling

At the level of daily operations, the discrepancies between the southern model of organized recreation and the implicit modes of organization common in northern communities is made explicit by the recreation administrator's heavy reliance on rigid scheduling and planning. The erection of large-scale facilities that are mainly designed to accommodate the requirements of such heavily scheduled forms of recreation, expresses the same orientation. Yet the reliance on such plans and schedules is changed by community members into a far more flexible program in ways which indicate that traditional values are functioning even in this sphere.

Scheduling: 'Dene Time'

The discrepancies between the two systems can become evident in something as ostensibly simple as the definition of a daily and weekly recreation schedule. For the Recreation Director, this can pose considerable problems, because it makes the delivery of regular recreation delivery

difficult. The traditional flexibility of Sahtudene organization of daily life, and its effect on contemporary, rigidly scheduled recreation delivery can be understood from two points of view.

First, the annual sequence of recreational activities is largely determined by the still evident close connection between the Sahtudene and the land. It is closely linked to traditional attitudes towards time, seasonal change, life cycles, and decision-making. 'Dene Time' determines when, how and if events will take place in the community, a major consideration for examination of cultural change in this situation. It respects the cyclical nature of Sahtudene life and provides an underlying structure of living, and an important aspect of recreation. Thus, environmental changes often have immediate, and not often predictable, repercussions for the weekly recreation schedule. During warm weather, events and recreation activities will be organized outdoors. In cold weather, most people will feel compelled to stay indoors. Therefore, environmental climatic change often means activity change. As 'seasons' end when the weather changes, so do activities; people move to another venue, beginning a new 'season.'

Second, this still observable attitude towards time and the traditional ecological focus of life (see Lee, 1990) contribute to a fluid schedule which often makes it difficult for the recreation administrator to maintain the intended recreation schedule for the duration of the term. Dene Time is slower and less structured, and runs contrary to the southern concept of rigidly scheduled time frames. Dene Time creates flexible conditions for instant action, or for delayed response, as may be appropriate.

It happened on several occasions that league scheduled that had been worked out in detail had to be abandoned because people who had indicated that they would participate in the scheduled activity, decided at short notice to pursue other activities. Flexibility is thus an important part of event planning, static schedules do not work with Dene Time. People are prepared to participate in a scheduled activity when a sufficient number of people are present, but they were not primarily motivated by the mere fact that an activity had been scheduled. Dependence is on people, not on the schedule. This reflects the traditional belief that events will develop in a situationally appropriate way which cannot be pre-determined by schedules. Activities which appeared to be in imminent danger of having to be abandoned for lack of participation, often succeeded with amazing levels of support where minutes before nobody had been seen present.

Such spontaneity of recreational activities was illustrated by an event initially involving a small group of about ten youths. After a gathering in the Hall, a group of youths were heading to the Youth Drop-in Centre. With little warning, they began to throw a small object high into the air and began to chase one another, trying to get the object. It began like a slow, informal game of 'keep-away'. The males kept the object from the females for the most part, but the females seemed determined to get the object from the males. The female participants would yell and call to each other, and yell at the person who was holding the object. As the game progressed, it attracted more people, some of whom joined, some of whom watched.

Eventually, some 40 people participated in the game, making the open area in the centre of the community the field of play. The game went on for about an hour, but it was only part of a whole range of activities. Considerable time was spent with peripheral actions between people and small groups that watched or sporadically took part. During play, anything seemed to be acceptable. For females, the object of the game was gain possession of, and hold on to, the ball. For the men, throwing and catching the ball seemed to be the main objective of play.

Onlookers tended to be older, but they were certainly vocal, as they called out in response to the flow and action of the game. On occasion, the ball was thrown into the crowd, but it quickly emerged into play after some mild struggling with the fortunate person who had made the catch or picked up the ball.

Ethnic Identity and Gendered Recreation

During the author's time in Fort Franklin, the construction of gendered power relationships was a pervasive aspect of ethnic boundary maintenance within the field of organized recreation. Traditionally, gendered social relationships had been ordered by a clear distinction between the spheres of men and women respectively, women occupying and directing the domestic sphere, men acting in what could be referred to as the public domain -- characterized, at a minimum, by the absence of women's influence outside the home. Transposed into the context of contemporary community recreation, the tendency of the men to bend the established recreation schedule to their own advantage constitutes a residual reconstruction of the traditional gendered division of life. The effectiveness of men's forms of behaviour such as interventions consisting

of jeering and verbal harassment, which succeeded in a number of instances in pushing the women off their assigned slots in the recreation schedule altogether, is in part rooted in a shared understanding held by both men and women, of the traditional division of public and private domains. The residual effect of the traditional role understanding is indicated by three facts: (1) The majority of women did find it indeed difficult to resist such approaches. (2) The men who pursued this strategy most consistently were elder men with the strongest ties to the traditional culture and its role expectations. (3) The women who were able to resist most consistently were those who as single mothers were the furthest removed from the traditional social grid and its role expectations.

This is not to suggest that the men sought to control the recreation schedule out of a conscious effort to maintain the boundaries of Sahtudene ethnic identity. Their immediate goal was simply to secure for themselves a disproportional share of available recreation opportunities. Yet the success of their strategy was in part based in the reconstruction of elements of traditional gendered cultural identity.

This refers back to an important theoretical point in Paine's (1974) criticism of the lack of an analysis of power relations in Barth's work. The above examination indicates that the maintenance of ethnic identity for the Sahtudene does not necessarily depend on the unified action of a group that is internally free of conflicts. One has to agree with Paine that even the exertion of power within the group in question may contribute to the maintenance of ethnic boundaries, in this case most clearly indicated by the strategy of the elderly male traditionalists, who intentionally sought to use traditional role expectations for their purposes.

Explicit Boundary Maintenance

The analysis to this point has brought out themes of boundary maintenance that attest to the continuing presence of traditional value orientations at an implicit level. In addition, the recreation of traditional identity occurs at an explicit, intentional level of boundary maintenance. This is most clearly demonstrated by the diametrically opposed functions of the Arena and Hall Complex and the Culture Centre. The Arena and Hall as a representation of the modern system of organized recreation contrasts with the Culture Centre as a venue for gatherings that the

participants experience as strictly traditional in nature. Additionally, these distinctions are extended into a direct separation of 'outsiders' from 'insiders'. Outsiders are those who come on official and government business are usually received in the Hall, while insiders are those who participate in the gatherings at the Culture Centre.

The sentiments of belonging and social cohesion expressed during the drum dances, hand games, and gatherings at the Culture Centre transform it into a powerful symbol of contemporary revitalized traditional culture. The atmosphere of the Culture Centre constitutes the catalyst for the expression of a cultural identity which the impersonal surroundings of the Arena and Hall are not capable of providing.

Within this manifestation of traditional culture, the gatherings at the Culture Centre at a secondary level also serve to express elements of the traditional social order which in part are based on status positions derived from mastery of traditional skills. The esteem in which the senior drummers and best hand gamers are held, is based on a mastery of traditional skills to which the junior participants at the gatherings aspire. It is these aspirations, directed at the mastery of traditional skills, that serve to reinforce the orientation towards the Sahtudene way of life.

Recreation Delivery: Across Boundaries

The ambiguities created when an aboriginal community strives to revitalize its cultural identity (Cheska 1987) within the context of cultural events designed in accordance with an external administrative model, were brought out on the occasion of the Spring Carnival staged shortly after the author's arrival.

The author arrived in his capacity as a recently graduated recreation professional, intent on applying a recreation management model designed to meet the needs of southern communities. As has been explained above, these models are characterized by heavy reliance on rigid scheduling and detailed planning. It was this approach that the author attempted to apply to the organization of the Carnival.

As the author gradually realized, this approach is incongruent with the community's traditional organizational methods. These methods are based on maintaining a steady flow of discussions relative to the format of events desired by the community. The validity of decisions arrived at during these discussions is based on the fact that they involve the whole community. This contrasts with the southern model that relies on the organizational leadership of individuals to make planning decisions on behalf of the group.

The community circumvented the potential tensions arising from these divergent approaches, by neither directly interfering with the Recreation Director's organizational activities nor by explicitly supporting them. Rather, the decision-making process referred to above was set in motion without the Recreation Director's involvement. When the latter gradually became aware of his exclusion from these ongoing discussions, he attempted to reintegrate himself into that process by delegating responsibilities for the planning process to community members. This administrative measure was accepted by the community. Once community members observed his sensitivity to these cultural differences, they facilitated his gradual integration into the community's communication network. In retrospect, the author considers this mutual exchange of responsibilities to have been crucial for the definition of his position in the community.

Outlook and Recommendations

As traditional values begin to reemerge and influence the Euro-Canadian recreation programs, recreation, sports, and games within the community are changing. Programs that reflect the values of southern Canadian approaches to recreation are no longer being adopted, but instead are being adapted to suit the needs of northern communities. Fort Franklin is a community that is changing, and re-embracing the traditional values that were displaced. Underneath those changes, its residents maintain a strong orientation towards the traditional culture.

As this study demonstrated, Sahtudene recreation reflects the changes in cultural orientation that occur as the Sahtudene engage in cultural restoration and community development occurring within the context of political devolution. Political devolution will ensure that in the area of recreation administration, as well, models based on the experience of northern residents will gain

increasing importance. It is within this context that recreation professionals will have to prepare for challenges which the following recommendations are designed to address:

1. Recreation professionals have to make themselves knowledgeable relative to the political, social and cultural conditions in their anticipated region of employment, before making the transition. This should include a visit to any community where employment is being considered. The examination of actual conditions and opportunities within the community must be understood, as well as first hand observations of community life and structure.

2. Connected to point (1), improved dissemination in southern educational institutions, of information concerning political, cultural and professional conditions of working in the north has to be accorded a high priority. Students (and researchers) should be made aware of the actual nature and conditions inherent in isolated communities. The images often portrayed through many media formats, often does not reflect actual conditions (positive or negative)

3. Improved access for northern aboriginal recreation students to professional development opportunities and professional placements. Communities should encourage the training of professionals and support student and institution requests for opportunities to gain experience in a variety of situations. Unique and challenging opportunities in a variety of locations and with a varying levels of support provide excellent learning opportunities for the aspiring professional.

4. Continued emphasis on the importance of, and support for, traditional forms of recreation and games at the community-level. This includes a separation of traditional elements from southern elements of recreation. Many groups and resources provide support for traditional and contemporary recreational pursuits, alternative means of support must be encouraged and developed.

5. Adjustment of approaches to recreation administration to better fit the informal processes of community-based decision-making. Dene time is not southern time, nor should it be made that way.

Personal Retrospective

From my arrival to my departure, and well beyond that time, I have learned about the people who live around Great Bear Lake. They are at home in a remote corner of Canada, and know who they are. I learned and shared in some aspects of their lives, but will never completely understand what it is to be Sahtudene. Their life focus is on nature and ecology, yet they are undergoing changed at a pace that many can not understand. Their identity is changing, for themselves and others.

Nothing I learned prepared me for life in a small, isolated, northern community. I entered the community as a recreation professional, trained through a university to develop sport and recreation opportunities. I have a background in administration, sport (at a high performance level), community and social development, and general life skills. Still, I was not able to adapt as quickly as one should.

When I entered the community I learned to let go of the plans, expectations, pace of life, all the elements of living in southern Euro-Canadian communities. I learned to listen and learn, watch and listen, and listen then do. I did not ask questions, I listened. I did not push, I waited for communication and discussion to present answers (even for questions that were not asked). This was all part of relearning how to operate in a recreation environment.

Many aboriginal (First Nation) groups are voicing similar concerns for methods of training recreation professionals in their communities. There is a way of doing things for every group of people, within Canada we have a group that has not, until recently, been considered. As such a professional I listened, and now understand, somewhat, how needs in Fort Franklin differ from anywhere else, and ways in which those needs may be addressed in a positive and constructive manner.

Methodological Reflection

I entered Fort Franklin as a recreation professional, not as a researcher. The position of employee within the Hamlet showed community life and peoples opinions that were, perhaps,

less contrived and more truthful and heartfelt. One phrase that an acquaintance used frequently was "I feel good about ...", I knew that he was telling me his true feelings on a subject of concern. These types of comments and the continual verification of Sahtudene beliefs, presented me with an ongoing statement of reality and reliability.

To have been a researcher would not have revealed the true essence of the community. Residents were tired of being researched and written about by people who came for a field season, a month, or just phoned to get information about community life, or history. My wife and I lived, contributed and shared our lives with the community, as a part of the whole. We had an interest in the people themselves as individuals. To this end, I have attempted not to attribute specific thoughts or ideologies to specific people except myself. That is to say, one perception of one reality.

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APPENDIX A

Déljne Statistical Profile

NWT Bureau of Statistics, January 1995

Census Population	
1991	551
1986	532
1981	521
Source: 1991 Census of Canada	

Ethnic Composition (1991)	
Total:	551
Inuit:	8
Dene:	509
Metis:	3
Non-Native:	31
Source: Population Estimates	

Population by Sex and Age -1991						
	Total	0 - 14 Years	15 - 24 Years	25 - 44 Years	45 - 64 Years	65 + Years
All Persons	550	185	115	150	65	30
Males	290	90	80	75	35	15
Females	265	95	40	70	45	15
Source: 1991 Census of Canada.						

Population by Mother Tongue - 1991		
Population		550
Single Response		550
	English	80
	French	5
	Other Languages	465
Multiple Responses		0
Source: 1991 Census of Canada.		

Households & Families			
		1991	1986
Private Households		130	105
Persons per Household		4.2	5
Census Families		105	85
	Husband-Wife Families	75	70
	Lone Parent Families	25	15
	Children per Family	2.8	3.1
Source: Census of Canada			

Education - 1991			
	Total	Males	Females
Population 15 Years & Over	365	195	170
Less than Grade 9	180	90	90
Grade 9-13 without Secondary Certificate	80	45	35
Grade 9-13 with Secondary Certificate	10	0	10
Trades Certificate or Diploma Only	10	0	10
Some Univ. or Non-Univ. without Diploma	20	15	0
University or Non-University with Diploma	50	30	20
University Degree	15	10	10
Source: 1991 Census of Canada.			

Labour Force Activity - 1994			
			Total
Population 15 Years & Over			387
	Labour Force		208
		Employed	111
		Unemployed	97
	Not in the Labour Force		159
Participation Rate: 57%			
Unemployment Rate: 47%			
Source: 1994 NWT Labour Force			

Personal Income					
	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988
Returns (no.)	280	270	260	240	220
Total Income ($'000)	5,554	4,872	4,214	3,681	3,080
Average Income ($)	19,836	18,044	16,208	15,338	14,000
Taxable Returns (no.)	130	140	140	130	100
Tax Paid ($'000)	745	704	580	490	375
Source: Revenue Canada Locality Code Statistics.					

Prices	
Food Price Index (Yellowknife = 100)	151
Nutritious Food Basket (Weekly $ for a Family of Four)	257
Thrifty Nutritious Food Basket (Weekly $ for a Family of Four)	228
Source: NWT Food Price Survey-1991	

Living Cost Differential ((Edmonton=100), 1994)	180-185
Source: Statistics Canada, Prices Division.	

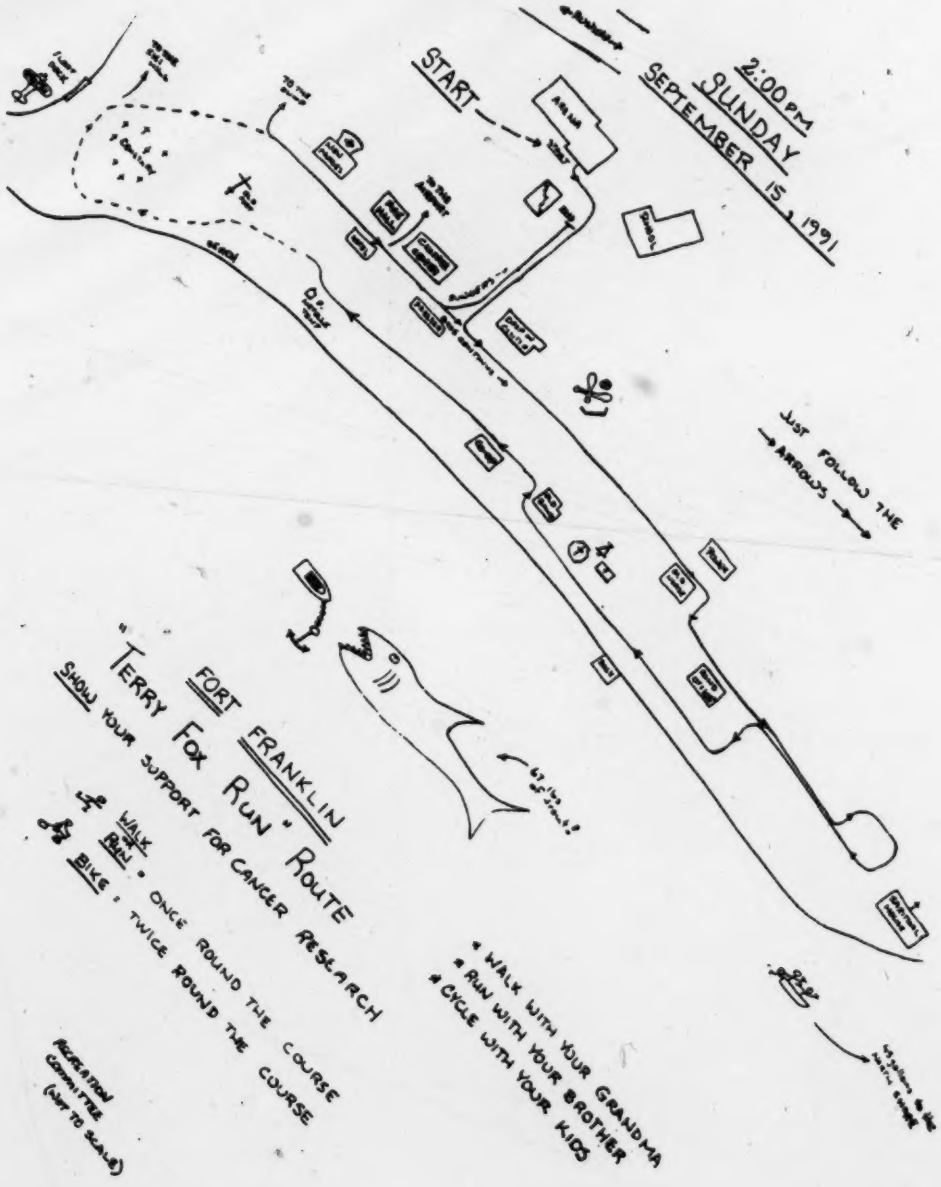
Notes:

1. To ensure confidentiality, data from the census are independently random rounded. As a result, all numbers from the census end in the digit 0 or 5.
2. Since 1986, all counts based on Revenue Canada Locality Code Statistics are independently rounded to the nearest 10. Total income and tax payable figures are rounded to thousands of dollars.

Reference: http://www.ssimicro.com/~kaifwi/deline.html

APPENDIX B

"Terry Fox Run" Route map



APPENDIX C
Fort Franklin Recreation Program Cycle for 1991-92
*overlapping of months

Activity	Grouping	January*	February*	March*	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Badminton		✔	✔							✔			
Basketball			✔	✔	✔			✔			✔	✔	
Bingo		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Broomball	mixed		✔	✔									
Broomball	women		✔									✔	✔
Brownies		✔	✔		✔	✔	✔				✔	✔	✔
Carnival					✔	✔							
Cross Country Skiing		✔	✔									✔	
Culture Centre		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Dancing	traditional	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Dancing	modern				✔	✔	✔				✔		
Dene Games						✔		✔					
Floor Hockey		✔	✔	✔	✔		✔					✔	✔
Gym		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Hockey	minor	✔	✔	✔								✔	✔
Hockey	men	✔	✔	✔	✔							✔	✔
Land Skills									✔				
Skating		✔	✔	✔									✔
Soccer													
Softball	men							✔	✔				

Activity	Grouping	January*	February*	March*	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Softball	mixed							✔					
Summer								✔	✔				
Volleyball	women	✔	✔	✔							✔		
Volleyball	men	✔	✔							✔	✔		
Volleyball	youth		✔	✔	✔			✔			✔	✔	✔
Waterfront								✔					

APPENDIX D

Personal Perspectives

In the fall of 1990 a friend of mine found an advertisement in the local newspaper and both of us had applied. The position advertised was for a Interim Recreation Director for the Hamlet of Fort Franklin. Neither of us knew anything about Fort Franklin (other than that it was located in the Northwest Territories), and did not really expect a reply. One afternoon in October, the Senior Administrative Officer (SAO) for the Hamlet phoned and, after a brief interview, offered me the position, starting as soon as possible. After discussing the opportunity with several friends and my parents, and further discussions with the SAO, I accepted the offer and a start date was set for January 15, 1991. Suddenly I realized that I was about to depart for the western Arctic, to live on the shores of a very large lake, in a community with just 600 people and all on the basis of a single phone call; I was excited with all the possibilities that lay ahead.

I saw this as an opportunity that was going to furnish me with the valuable experience necessary to further my intended career goals. I could never have foreseen that this experience would materialize into a year of primary participant observation research for a graduate degree. Had I gone North with the intention of doing research, I do not think that I could have become as involved in the community as I was. I would not have had the time, nor the opportunity, to meet the many people who allowed me to become a part of their lives, and would not have been able to spend the amount of time that I did in discovering a very different lifestyle that challenged and enriched my experiences.

A Beginning

Boxes packed, a trunk full of essentials, and suitcases ready. On January 12, 1991 I set off on my journey to Fort Franklin. I took an early morning flight from Edmonton to Norman Wells then, as a plane was unavailable until the next afternoon, I checked into a motel, made a phone call to my parents, and fell asleep; more than anxious to actually arrive in Fort Franklin. The next day I flew from Norman Wells to Fort Franklin.

To step off a plane and onto a snowy runway after spending two days travelling is a relief. I was met at the airstrip and we put my pack, the few boxes I had brought and the trunk into the back of a blue Incorporated Hamlet of Fort Franklin Ford F-150 truck. The gentleman that had met me

motioned for me to hop in and so my stay began. I got a short tour of Fort Franklin; the house where I was to live, the key buildings in the Hamlet, and the places people frequented, if someone needed to be found, were all pointed out to me. The tour lasted about 12 minutes. He explained that he did not know where the key to my house was so we could not open it and put my stuff in, but that the person who had the key would definitely show up for coffee at the Great Bear Lake Hotel, and that we would meet him there. There was no panic, no racing around trying to find the person with the key to my new residence, and no rush to get anything else done while we were waiting. What a change from my previous life in Edmonton.

We sat, drinking coffee and talking to people I had never met before but would probably get to know very well in the future. The only person not present yet was the holder of my key. He had the key to my house because he had been fixing the plumbing prior to my arrival. When he finally arrived at the hotel, he sat and had coffee with us. After coffee, a smoke and some instructions as to when certain things would happen, we all jumped back into the truck and drove to my new house. I found that many of the boxes I had packed and sent ahead of me from Edmonton were already inside. The power was on, the house was heated and the water tank was full; this was now my home.

I was alone, thousands of miles from my other life. The surroundings were unfamiliar to me; fortunately I was familiar with the objectives of my new position and this provided me with a base from which to start. In southern Canada, my objectives had been well laid out and I knew how to fulfil those requirements. In the North the duties are not as well defined and I wondered whether my expertise would enable me to handle all the tasks that were set out initially. What duties were to come in the future, and whether I could handle them, was a different matter. Southern-learned expertise is often not applicable in the North. Initially there is a lot to learn about northern attitudes and expectations. Luckily, I had been exposed to the relaxed attitude, the informal discussion that led to a decision and had met several key figures (who were a strong influence in the months to come) immediately upon my arrival. My coffee shop experience was the perfect introduction into my new way of life.